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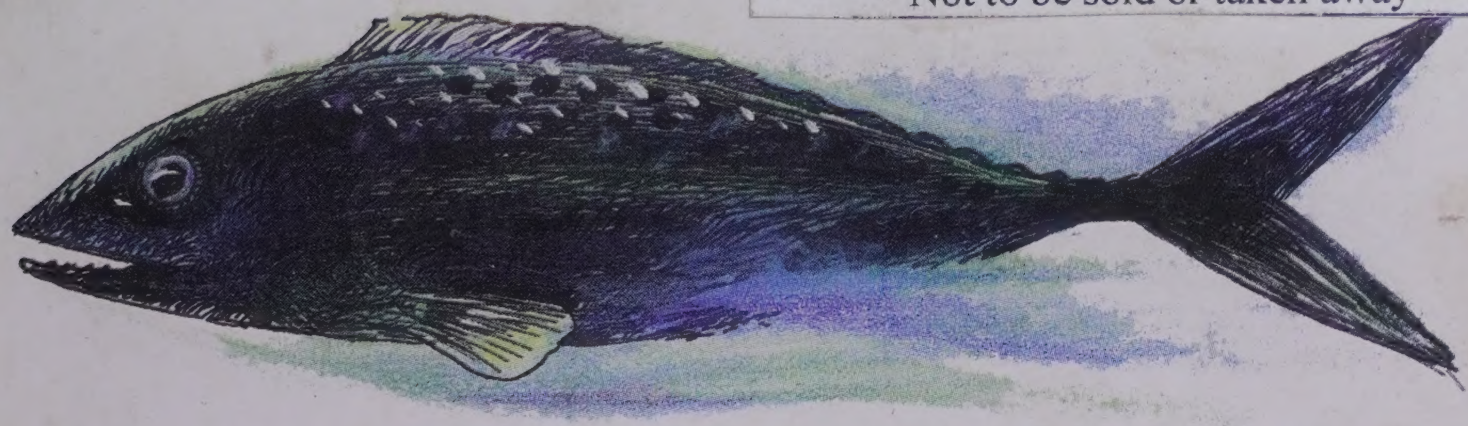

# The Transforming

# of Goa

Edited by Norman Dantas

The Other India Press

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*Edited by*
Norman Dantas

**The Other India Press**
Above Mapusa Clinic,
Mapusa 403 507, Goa, India.

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In memory of Norman Dantas
21.3.1998

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# *Introduction*

## Norman Dantas*

It is difficult to find a Goan who will not thump his (or her) chest and declaim proudly: "*Hanv Goenkar!*". But it is a far more knotty task to find two of the tribe who will agree on who or what is 'Goan'. The conundrum grows and the debate continues, in bars, *balcaoes* and buses. Disagreements are dissolved with the jest—now almost epithetic—that for every two Goans there are three opinions. So each holds his own and goes his 'Goan' way.

More than casual attempts have, of course, been made to define the Goan identity. Eminent sons have often been asked and native litterateurs have essayed to distill the essence of Goanness. Their offerings too have been as varied as the numerous kinds of 'pure' *feni* available nowadays. But, both formal and informal endeavours bring one thing to the fore: the Goanness so dearly held to is a romantic notion fixed in the hoary past with little or no relationship to contemporary reality.

This nostalgia characterises the Goan psyche today better than anything else, even as it indicates a 'national debility': an inability to synthesise deep love for 'the motherland' with the jagged edges of reality. The infirmity and its consequences are reflected most sharply in this state's politics—the lack of clarity, the uncertainty of choice and the concomitant confusion about which way and how Goa should go.

Some say Goans have themselves to blame and one cannot reject the charge out of hand. But it can be argued that the vast majority of Goans have had little opportunity to become capable of analysing and understanding the larger forces at work in the chang-

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**Norman Dantas was one of the best journalists Goa has ever produced. Former editor of* Goa Today *and Deputy Editor of the* O Heraldo, *he died on 21st March, 1998.*

ing world around them. For years, pre- and post-Liberation, forced migration of thousands, for employment, has created the distance which makes hearts grow fonder for an idealised home shorn of everyday problems. Then again, coming out from under the colonial yoke into the 'free air of democracy', the Goan people have been led by politicians as blind in perspective, but made worse by singular devotion to self (and of course, pelf). The post-Liberation 'free press', dominated by big business, has not helped the cause of popular enlightenment either—in fact, at almost every crucial moment, it has opposed the popular interest. And then, almost all 'serious literature' appearing on bookshelves has been glorifying the Goa of yore, primarily for the edification of the tourist visiting this no-longer-paradise.

The purpose of this book is to help a breaking out from the fossilized *Amchem Bhangarachem Goem* (Our Golden Goa) mindset and to promote a better understanding of where we really are at. It focusses on Goa and the Goan identity as it has been—in flux and transformation—between the tradition-bound Portuguese period and the present India-oriented, commerce-driven democratic times. The book takes a close look at change rather than stasis and in that is counterpoint to much of the mythification and obfuscation that Goans are subjected to.

This, of course, is not an 'authoritative, original work of research'. As we realised setting out on this project, neither database nor financial resources would permit the early completion of such a venture. We have therefore opted to compile essays and research papers which discuss aspects of Goa, its culture and life over the last few decades of epochal change. It must also be said that the compilation is not comprehensive. But we feel it presents a fairly holistic picture—and certainly enough to identify and prompt further, more intensive study of vitally significant aspects in transformation or under siege. There is a unity too in what, at first glance, might seem like a potpourri of diversity.

Leading off, Prabhakar Angley discusses how Goa has been interpreted and misinterpreted, Goans 'conceived' and misconceived in the aftermath of the Liberation by various writers and journalists. Given the importance of understanding a culture and a people as they really are, he makes a scathing attack on the tendency to project Goa as a part of Europe transplanted in India and to deny its essential Indianness.

Tackling the touchy issue of Goan Catholics being historically 'denationalised', Nishtha Tombat compares the writings of Francisco Luis Gomes and Tristao Braganza Cunha who, 80 years apart, had divergent approaches to the issues of nationalism and freedom, but

"were both great nationalists whose voices continue to echo in varying resonances today". Germane too, in the context of Goan Catholics' tradition in transformation is Teotonio de Souza's essay on the Church in Goa before and after the Liberation. He incisively compares the 'lamb-like' Church under the Portuguese with that in the rest of India which wanted Goa free and discusses changing Church traditions after the colony was delivered into freedom.

Central to the objects of the book is Robert Newman's tracing of the evolving Goan identity: first, the yearning of elite Catholics to be European and co-opt Portuguese as their mother tongue whilst elite Hindus looked to India and Marathi *Ayee*; then the confused, churning post-Liberation years of the merger/anti-merger movements; and finally the victory of Konkani *Mai*, the true mother tongue, and the achievement of Statehood. Pertinent is Newman's discussion of how Goans can and are beginning to find the elusive definition of their identity in commonly shared language, religious practices and cultural roots.

A companion piece is Frederick Norohna's look at the issues behind the subject of officially determining Goans' mother tongue and nurturing it. His identification of several factors and undercurrents which transformed what should have been a straightforward exercise into the biggest controversy of the last decade provides good clues to what hampers unification of Goans and emergence of a universally shared perception of their identity.

Folk theatre is a key form of cultural expression and its vitality an indicator of whether healthy traditional roots continue to sustain a culture which is in the process of transformation. Two juxtaposed selections speak for the Goan reality today rather eloquently. Pramod Kale's paper on the vibrant *Tiatr* explores, in fine detail, how this popular theatre form of the common Goan Catholic reflects and is reinvigorated by the reality. On the other hand, Devendra Karapurkar laments the withering of several once healthy Hindu folk theatre forms. Want of sufficient evolution and contemporary social relevance is sapping their vitality, he says. Ironically, as Kale points out, *Tiatr* developed from the very *Zagor* and *Fell (Khell)* which Karapurkar mourns the passing of.

The book's key essay is Newman's analysis of how politicians and businessmen-industrialists have come together after the Liberation to transform Goa from a traditional-colonial backwater into a bourgeois-capitalist melting pot. It describes, in enlightening relief, the nature of underdevelopment in (which forced migration from) this beautiful, serene pre-Liberation free port, and how Goans, their traditions and land have been dominated and changed drastically by

industrial-commercial interests acting from behind the skirts of politicians and their parties. This essay is certainly vital to an understanding of the underpinnings of Goa's transformation and the pressures on her traditions.

Closely linked with Newman's essay is Noronha's analysis of the local big business-dominated English newspapers' role vis-a-vis the people's interests. It is perhaps the first serious attempt to present detailed evidence of how Goa's English dailies have consistently opposed popular protest and the public interest. And its relevance is only underscored by the fact that the owners of these newspapers also control the local language press.

The most striking facet of Goa's transformation is the drastic change in its natural environment, especially since the Liberation. That the habitat is crucial to the sustenance of a culture is incontestable and its preservation, therefore, is a core issue. Claude Alvares reviews the wanton destruction of fragile ecosystems and warns of dire consequences in the not too distant future if the tide is not stemmed. The question, of course, is whether Goan public interest can deter the bourgeois-capitalist juggernaut.

Finally, a review of Goa's tradition in transformation would seem incomplete without a 'backward glance' at a substantial section of Goa's populace. Anita Haladi's *Unchanging Plight of the Original Goans* describes the predicament of the *Gavde-Kunbi*, the first settlers in Parashuram's paradise: how they were dispossessed of their lands; their continuing oppression and domination by landlords earlier and now by modern commerce; and their ongoing unsuccessful attempts to secure justice. The essay also takes a look at the uniquely syncretic cultural traditions that bind Hindu and Christian *Gavda-Kunbi* and which are the font of much Goan folk culture.

In the final essay, David Wilson provides a critical view of the tourism scene in Goa and ventures further to do a critique of tourism's critics as well. The essay is an excellent, wide-ranging documentation of the impact of tourism on Goan society. One may not agree with all his facts, but his opinions certainly need to be taken note of.

As stated earlier, this does not claim to be a comprehensive compilation. Yet it provides sufficient material and the stimulus for a sharper analysis of Goan tradition in transformation. Such critical thinking is necessary if Goans are to come to grips with the present and take charge of their future.

1

# *A Culture 'Conceived' and Misconceived*

**Prabhakar Angley***

Ever since the Liberation took place on December 19, 1961, all sorts of liberties have been taken by mediamen and others, including some who posed as 'researchers', to write anything they felt like about Goa's history and culture, completely distorting our socio-cultural image. These writers have not been taken to task either for their ignorance about Goa or for their intentional distortion of what Goa really is. They have been let scot free despite the irreparable damage they have inflicted on the Goan people. I believe this has been essentially because some vested interests within Goa wanted us to be projected to the rest of the world as completely different from the people across this state's borders.

An *Air India* calendar referred to Goans as descendants of Portuguese and Goans. Some, especially 'those who matter', swallowed the statement with only a murmur. Fortunately, a few eminent Goans like Charles Correia, an internationally celebrated architect, lodged a strong protest which resulted in *Air India* withdrawing the calendar from circulation. But mere withdrawal does not undo the impression the calendar perpetuated.

Manohar Malgaonkar, a famous writer who was specially assigned by the state's government to write a book on Goa, brought out a good looking, luxurious tome entitled '*Inside Goa*'. But its contents,

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**Prabhakar Angley is Goan born and bred, with a Science diploma taken in the Portuguese language and a Commerce degree in English. He has been very active in post-Liberation Goa, on public and quasi-government bodies, in the areas of commerce, culture, education and sports. This is an edited excerpt from his book,* Goa: Concepts and Misconcepts *published in November 1994 by Goa Hindu Association, Mumbai.*

in impeccable English, could be classified (without meaning any offense to the writer) as impressions one would have carried after completing a conducted tour of the erstwhile communist countries—during which one was shown only the sights a tour-guide was briefed to show the visitor. In the book, he has used the adage *'Te firange gele, te unde kabar zale'* as if to mean that the good things were finished in Goa with the departure of the Portuguese. The saying literally means 'those foreigners have gone, those loaves of bread are over'. And the fact is that it was frequently used in Goa even when the Portuguese were here—in the same sense as 'old is gold', expressing the universal resentment of good things in life gradually disappearing. In this case however, the writer's tour-guide certainly seems to have belonged to the category of a few persons we still have amongst us who take pleasure in denigrating post-Liberation Goa.

The Hindu editor of a famous (now defunct) weekly who has his ancestral roots in Goa, did not know till as late as the 1980s that Hindus constituted two thirds of Goa's population. The 'Goa special' issues of this weekly also, invariably, projected Goa as if it were a part of the western world.

On to an article by Ashok Mahadevan in the July 1990 issue of *Reader's Digest*.

The author thought it fit to entitle "Goa—India with a Portuguese accent". This 'accent' was revealed to the author through his contacts exclusively with a particular elite section of the Goans. Did he notice such an accent in the common man in Goa or in the majority? Had he met a cross section of different communities, he would not have written that "much of Goan cuisine consists of Portuguese dishes spiced up to suit mixed fiery tastes".

The author further adds that an illustrious personality of Goa, Dr Jose Rangel, told him: "We are Indians by blood but our culture is Indo-Portuguese. This mixed culture was created over centuries. It cannot and must not disappear." What is the percentage of Goans who would subscribe to this view? Would even half a dozen Goan Hindu families claim that their culture is Indo-Portuguese?

Shoma Chatterjee, in the June 1988 issue of *Woman's Era* wrote that the singer, Lata Mangueshkar has gifted the famous Mangueshi Temple to her home town in Goa. From where did she obtain this incorrect information—which may become 'history' if it remains uncontested? After all, the affinity with the surname coupled with Lataji's wealth could lead a lot of readers to give credence to the statement made by the illustrious author of the article. But history is that the temple, in its present form, was rebuilt in 1890 much be-

fore Lata Mangueshkar or, for that matter, her distinguished father, Master Dinanath was born.

An eminent jurist known for his studied and forthright views congratulates Goans every time he addresses Goan audiences, for having decided to remain a separate political entity. In spite of his studious nature, he did not think it fit to know as to why, in spite of all the material benefits which would accrue to Goa by remaining separate, 44.52 percent of the voters had chosen to merge Goa with the neighbouring state. Though only of academic importance, it would be interesting to study if the percentage of literate voters who voted for merger was higher than that of those who voted for the status quo. When this jurist was casually informed that more than 1500 drama performances in Marathi are held, on an amateur basis, in Goa every year, his reaction was "Marathi? Here?"

The renowned journalist M.V. Kamath, writing in the *Indian Express* of November 10, 1985, came to the conclusion that there was no reason for Marathi to have any status in Goa. His comments came at a time when 56 percent of children attending primary schools in Goa had chosen the Marathi medium and only 0.46 percent of children were learning through Konkani. Unfortunately, the status of journalists like M.V. Kamath influences opinion formation of those who are not aware of facts.

It was once mentioned under "Current Topics" of *The Times of India* (in August 1973) that drinking was a way of life with Goans. On what premises such a sweeping statement was based is difficult to understand. Besides, can drinking be a way of life?

The presenter of Doordarshan's *Surabhi* programme introduces his feature on Goa by saying "Goa—*Mouj mastika pradesh*" (Goa—a land of fun and fiesta). Is this true? The presenter of Zee TV's programme *Gata Rahe Mera Dil* observes: "what is *lavni* to Maharashtra, *dulpod* is to Goa". How many in Goa know what *dulpod* is? *Dulpod* is, in fact, the last two lines of composition accompanying the *mando* and sung in a faster tempo. Is it as popular in Goa as *lavni* is in Maharashtra? Many a Goan does not know what dulpod is.

Now consider what Mr Dalrymple wrote in the September 1993 issue of the widely circulated American magazine *Traveller*. During his sojourn in Goa, the writer met one Percival Noronha, a Goan historian who told him, "We were ruled from Portugal for four hundred and fifty years and twenty three days." He said with an accent heavy with southern European vowels: "The result of this is that we are completely different from other Indians—completely different, I say! We Goans have a different mentality, a different language, a differ-

ent culture. Although we are now under Indian occupation, I feel awkward when I cross the old border into India...suddenly everything changes: the food, the landscape, the buildings, the people, the way of life..."

The statement is attributed to a person whose name resembles that of a retired officer of Goa's Department of Information and Tourism. But this gentleman is not known to be "a historian", as the writer puts it and it is unbelievable that an officer of his standing would talk about "Indian occupation". Perhaps, the author met someone who is not happy with what has happened in Goa after its Liberation. But the lesson to be learnt from this episode is that there are people in Goa who feel "completely" different from other Indians. "Mr Noronha" thinks it fit to mention the period of Portuguese rule in Goa in terms of years and days, ignoring the important fact that only 20% of Goa's present area was under Portuguese during the period mentioned by him and the other 80% was under their rule for less than 200 years.

*The Times of India* supplement, *Goa Plus* in its edition of June 9, 1994 reports: "Though Goans may eat South Indian food outside their homes, not many cook it in their houses as it involves a lot of grinding and is elaborate, says Carlo. Food is something one grows up with." The issue, though insignificant shows insufficient knowledge of facts, since so called South Indian dishes viz. *Dossa*, *Idli*, *Uppit*, *Utappa*, etc. are regularly prepared in Goan Hindu houses, perhaps under different names such as *Poley*, *Sanna* or *Hit*, *Sanjo*, *Bhakri*, etc. Grinding has been a routine affair in Hindu homes and nowadays, for the sake of convenience, electric grinders have taken the place of grind stones.

A tourist guide-supplement of *The Week* dated March 27, 1994 carries a statement of Capt C P Krishna Nair, Chairman of Leela group of hotels to the effect that Goa "is a small replica of Europe's Latin culture on the Arabian coast". In the same issue, Raghav Varma and Beena Manmadhan state, "The Portuguese brought with them the Latin traditions and life-styles of Christianity. The predominant Hindu society in Goa was soon pervaded by this alien culture". These statements only represent a lack of genuine interest in studying the relevant facts before they are published. Preconceived notions are also the cause behind such misleading statements.

A book published by the New Delhi-based Ratnasagar Pvt. Ltd. not long ago, and approved by the National Council of Educational Research and Training, states that Christmas is the major festival of Goa and Carnival is a popular "local festival of Goa". There is no

mention of other festivals being celebrated in the state on a large scale, including Ganesh Chaturthi, Divali and Id. The author does not seem to know that over two thirds of Goa's population is Hindu. In its section on dress and customs, the author says that all men wear shirts and trousers and the women wear dresses or skirts and blouses in Goa. The book also states that Goans are fun loving and out to have a good time. *The Times of India* took the writer to task. Academic circles in Goa expressed surprise that such a book could be written and circulated in schools. Citizens' group in Goa also came down heavily on the contents of this book. But such reactions are rare.

Entertainment programmes presented by the Goa government's agencies before visiting dignitaries, invariably include items which do not represent Goan culture. Time and again inclusion in such programmes of the Portuguese dance *Corredinho* has been criticised at all levels. However, Doordarshan seems to be unconcerned by this and thought it fit to include *Corredinho* in a programme on dances of Goa telecast on August 15, 1994 to mark the Independence Day of the country. Before Liberation, this form of dance was occasionally and exclusively performed by *Mestiços* (Luso-Indians). It does appeal to the viewers given the attractive attire of the participants and the enjoyable rhythm, but under no circumstances can it have the label of 'Goan dance'.

Tourists who are taken on boat cruises are also entertained with *Corredinho* fare and the organisers justify the selection by saying: "Tourists like it. When they come to Goa, they want to see something different." If one accepts this contention, any attempt to vulgarise Goa's culture should be forgiven simply because tourists like it. I am reminded of the observation made by the former US Ambassador to India John Gunther Dean who, at a party hosted in his honour during his visit to Goa, had said "You must give the tourist what you have! Not what he wants." These words are extremely significant in the context of presenting items which create a distorted picture of the culture of a region.

Doordarshan's national integration slot *Mile Sur Mera Tumhara* shows a group of Goans in aristocratic western attire and one wonders on what grounds this is included since it does not typify Goa. A similar approach is evident in the selection of themes for floats to be sent from Goa for the Republic Day parades in New Delhi. They have received prizes from juries in spite of the fact that they have not depicted true Goan culture and this has met with criticism from the local media. Unfortunately, the theme chosen for last

year's parade was not liked by the New Delhi authorities. It did not present Goa in the manner *they* wanted Goa to be presented and consequently, the proposed float was dropped from the parade.

During my close association with a few cultural institutions in Goa—and especially Kala Academy—I have found myself in the predicament of being told by an outsider as to what my culture is and therefore I have had a tiff or two with some high powered cultural advisors of the Government of India. It is they who decide what items should be selected for national or international cultural fetes and events. And they do not like to be told that their selection is not representative of Goan culture. They even go to the extent of suggesting which groups or personalities should be selected. In this game they win, Goa loses! Fortunately, a sort of resentment is being publicly expressed over these issues and things might be set right in the near future.

2

# *Of Konkan-Kashi and Goa's Golden Age*

**Bal V Apte***

There is a tendency to be facile about Goa's history. Inspired, perhaps, by the impressive church complex at Old Goa and the numerous churches and chapels elsewhere, writers have been quick to label it 'Rome of the East'. Heavily gilted altars have prompted paeans to a 'Golden Goa'. Consequently, miscegenated histories and socio-cultural profiles of Goans have been only 'logical' steps away. Few have cared to look across the river from Old Goa at the ancient site of Konkani-Kashi—considered by the *Purana* holier than Kashi itself—and ruminate the roots of Goan culture. As few have peered beyond the altars to see the real golden age which made all that gilt possible. Even limited attempts at both, however, substantially help understanding crucial aspects of the ancient and rich Goan tradition.

**Why 'Konkan-Kashi'?**

Kashi, now more widely known as Varanasi, has been revered since ancient times for two major reasons. It has been considered holiest of the holy places of India—the worship of the *Vishvanatha* there, is believed to grant *mukti* (freedom from the eternal wheel of *samsara*, the ever moving cycle of birth and death). Secondly, it long has been acknowledged as a premier seat of Vedic learning and San-

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**'Rome of the East' and 'Golden Goa' are now familiar shibboleths virtually synonymous with the Portuguese Estado da India in most people's minds. Apte points out that long before Goa could pretend to being Vatican of the Orient, it was a preeminent, widely venerated seat of Hinduism and that the Portuguese destroyed rather than created 'Golden Goa'. The writer is a professor of English at P.E.S. College, Ponda, Goa.*

skrit studies. Historically, Goa has tenably rivalled Kashi on both of these counts.

The shrine of Saptakoteshwara, originally on the island of Diwar, is believed to be a very potent font of *mukti*. The *Sahyadri Khanda* of *Skanda Purana* says: "In the midst of Gomati Ganga (the river now known as Mandovi), there is the holy island of Deepavati (Diwadi, Diwar), where was consecrated the wonderful *lingam* of Saptakoteshwara by the famous Seven Sages; the *lingam* is a little more powerful than that of Kedarnath in the Himalaya; one is freed from all sins at the sight (*darshana*) of it and attains salvation at the touch of it. Thus the place is believed to be a little holier than even Kashi." Fr Francisco de Souza, in his *Oriente Conquistado*, testified centuries later: "Diwar was as much venerated by the Hindus as the Holy Land is by us, on account of a temple of many indulgences and pilgrimages, and, even at present, on a certain day of the year, the Hindus hopefully flock there to bathe themselves in the margin of the river facing the locality where the temple was formerly situated, so that they might not lose their plenary indulgence."

Then again, Goa has had a very long tradition of Vedic and Sanskritic learning. Shri Goudapadacharya was the guru of the guru of the great Adi Shankaracharya. The *Goudapadacharya Mutt*, originally situated on the banks of Aghanashini Ganga (the river now known as Zuari) at Kushasthali (Cortalim) and shifted to Kavlem during the time of Portuguese-wrought havoc, claims an unbroken tradition since Goudapada. The inscriptions and copper plates of Kadamba kings from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries also testify to the establishment of *brahmapuris* (institutes of Vedic and Sanskritic learning), one at the present location of Old Goa.

Further, as is the case with all holy places in India, the land of Goa was studded with temples. Leonardo Paes, in his *Prontuario das Definicoes Indicas*, remarks: "This idol-worshipping people have, for sheltering their Gods or Idols, some houses called Pagodas. So many are these temples that there is no place in their land, however limited it may be, where do not exist these temples. As if the cities, villages and wards are not sufficient for them, temples are found even on the highest hills and on any island or cliff formed by the sea."

All this is indicative enough of Goa's pre-eminence as a nerve centre of ancient Indian culture, besides providing ample evidence of its being, undisputedly, Konkan-Kashi. And the traditions continue, though weakened by the body blows dealt them during Portuguese rule, especially by the notorious Goa Inquisition. To date, thousands flock to the relocated shrine of Saptakoteshwara for the holy bath on

*Shravan Ashtami* (eighth day of the dark fortnight of August). The river bank there is known now as *Teertha* (font of holiness) whilst the Diwar bank opposite, where the shrine stood originally, is called *Porne Teertha* (old font of holiness). The *Goudapadacharya Mutt* and the Vaishnav *Partagali Mutt* (at Partagal in Canacona taluka) still continue to impart instruction in the Veda and Sanskrit.

The majority Goan Hindu population still follows Puranic pantheism based on the broad philosophy of Vedanta. The main deities worshipped all over India are widely worshipped in Goa: Shiva, under various names—Somnatha, Saptakoteshwara, Gomanteshvara, Ramanatha, Nagesh, Mangesha, Mallikarjuna, etc.; Vishnu, as Narayana, Keshava, Madhava, Ananta, as also Rama, Krishna, Gopinatha, etc.; Shakti as Shantadurga, Navadurga, Vijayadurga, Mahamaya, Bhagavatee, Chamunda as well as Mahalaxmi, Mahalasa, Sharvani, Kamaxi, etc.; and various others, such as Ganesha, Datta, Hanuman, Kalbhairav, Betal, Ravalnatha, etc.

The main Indian festivals are traditionally and enthusiastically celebrated in Goa—Ganesh, Navaratri, Dassera, Diwali, Shivratri, Holi, etc.—with local variations and emphases. Until the last generation, it was a common practice in every household to gather together for recitations from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata and other Purana. This practice still continues in the temples. The forms of worship, with *Bhajan, Arati, Purana, Keertana*, are the same and the sacraments are also the same as those all over India. And, despite two and a half centuries of inhuman persecution by the Inquisition, even converts to Christianity still visit, venerate, and consult the oracles at temples of their family or village deities (*kuladevata* and *gramadevata*).

All this shows that mainstream Goan culture is not different from Indian culture—it is, fundamentally, very much one and the same.

## Unity in Diversity

The principle of 'live and let live' has been followed in India from time immemorial. The vast Indian subcontinent naturally abounded in various ethnic communities, widely diversified in dress, habits, customs, manners, rituals, worships, creeds, heroic traditions and languages. Maharishi Vyasa, that greatest of sages on socio-cultural assimilation, laid down the guiding principles: not the Semitic policy of 'You are wrong, I am right/Your Gods are false, my God is true/Give up yours, accept mine or die,' but the Vedanta policy of 'God is one, but manifests himself in many ways/Your and my gods

are the manifestations of the One Supreme God and thus both are equally true and venerable/All paths lead to the same God/Differences in customs, manners, dress and worship are apparent and secondary, though natural, and the broad humanitarian values are the basic foundation.'

On the firm foundation of the most rational Advaita Vedanta philosophy, the Puranic tradition built up the wonderful edifice of Indian society; the ethnic plurality and diversity were woven into the wonderfully variegated yet integrated fabric of Indian culture. The gods and deities of various ethnic communities were assimilated into one family through the instruments of *Avatara* (incarnation) and *Parivara* (family). This has been a unique and wonderful process.

The vast subcontinent, stretching from Kashmir to Kerala and Gujarat to Assam, has assimilated invading communities throughout history. It also has been providing honourable asylum to the persecuted all the time—the early Christians (St Thomas), the Jews, the Parsees, the Tibetans, etc. Consequently, India is a most pluralistic society and nation: language, race, ethnicity, religion or creed—no common thread holds all together, other than the wonderful Puranic cultural tradition. If this cultural unity is denied, there is no integration; asserting cultural dissimilarity would lead to balkanisation and disintegration.

The fact of Goans' conversion must be accepted, but it cannot justify extraterritorial, extranational loyalties and denial of their ancestral heritage. The converts can be (and largely have been) assimilated smoothly into the spectrum of Puranic culture. They, in turn, should remember, like Rev N V Tilak: "We are Indian Christians, we have accepted Christ and the New Testament, but the glorious tradition from the Vedas to medieval saints is our Old Testament." The glorious traditions of Konkan-Kashi can only root their self-pride deep in the history and the soil of their motherland.

**The Myth of Portuguese 'Golden Goa'**

We need also to break the myth of the Portuguese being creators of 'Golden Goa'. It is a blatant historical lie. The Portuguese did not come as liberators, benefactors or builders of this land. On the contrary, it was the prosperity, opulence and fabulous wealth of an already legendary 'Golden Goa' that drew them here. And they laid it waste—with violence and destruction, religious bigotry and brutal persecution, myopic administration and sordid corruption.

For at least a millennium before the Portuguese arrival, Goa had been an internationally known—and coveted—emporium of

trade, mentioned in historical texts as *"Gouba"* by Ptolemy and *"Kava Sindabur"* (Goa Chandrapur) by the Arabs. As the editor of this volume puts it in *Fish, Curry and Rice* (Ecoforum, 1993):

"There can be little doubt that Goa was among the most important entrepots of the ancient and medieval world. The Greeks discussing it even before Alexander of Macedonia approached the Indus is indication enough of eminence in antiquity. And it certainly was one of the fabled realms around which *Tales from the Arabian Nights* were woven.

"As early as in the eleventh century, Kadamba copper plates described Goa's impressive reach and trade. Then, when the port was still on the Zuari river, ships came to Gopakapattana from the Malabar, Ceylon, Bengal and Sumatra to the South and East, and Cambay, Aden, Hormuz and Zanzibar to the North and West.

"The flourishing mercantile community dealt in fine calico and muslins, jewels, gold and silver, pepper, spices, camphor and perfumes—apart from the more mundane betel nut, betel leaves, paddy and victuals. Whilst some ships brought the riches of the East, the Arabs brought horses.

"It was not just an exchange point; the robust trade spawned local industries including spinning and weaving, brass and iron works, jewellery, oil extraction and, of course, shipbuilding.

"The index of its stature was the internationally acceptable gold currency then in use, embossed with the legal leonine crest of the ruling Kadambas and with their patron deity, Saptakoteshwara.

"When the Portuguese arrived five centuries later, Goa was under Muslim rule. The city and port had shifted north, to the banks of the Mandovi. But it was then, by all accounts, even more important and splendidly prosperous.

"Ships still sailed in from Sumatra (and even China), Aden and Hormuz. Overland caravans brought the fabled riches of central and south India from their respective power centres, Devgiri (now Daulatabad) and Vijayanagar (now Hampi), to be traded for horses and muskets. The wealth in transaction can be extrapolated from a documented estimate that one year's customs duties alone could pay for 500 horses."

That was 'Golden Goa'. With the Portuguese came maladministration and rampant corruption. The public treasury was depleted and consuming epidemics, starting 1543, laid the flourishing entrepot low. But, perhaps more than anything else, the forced conversions and the black practices of the Goa Inquisition precipitated the end

of prosperity. One need not dwell on the details of that dark period; it suffices to quote (the Portuguese) Cunha Rivara who, in his *Historical Essay on Konkani Language*, noted: "The Inquisition cannot be absolved from a large share in the persecution of the vernacular; and what is more, a large part in the ruin of the Portuguese Empire in Asia."

The policy of religious persecution compelled the local populace, both Hindu and Catholic, to flee and Goa declined (while Bombay flourished under British tolerance). Despite the two hundred year Portuguese effort to add to the grandeur of a once great city and make it the capital of their eastern empire—and 'Rome of the East'—it decayed and was ultimately left in ruins. Thus 'Golden Goa' passed into history. Given this, it cannot be denied that the Kadamba period was the truly golden age of Goa. The Portuguese should be remembered only as its destroyers.

3

# *The Struggle for a Goan Identity*

**Robert S. Newman***

On May 31, 1987, Goa became the 25th state in the Republic of India. Nearly four months earlier, Konkani had been made the official language of the small territory on India's west coast, south of Bombay. Thus, 1987 was a landmark year in Goan history, the year in which Goan identity was officially recognised. Goa became a linguistic state in a nation of linguistic states and her regional cultural identity was given permanent acknowledgement by the Union of India.

This essay is about two things. First, I want to attempt a limited discussion of Goan identity. This is very difficult because I do not accept that there is such a thing as the 'Goan mind'. There is no unanimity amongst Goans as to what constitutes a 'Goan' or 'Goan-ness', nor among social scientists as to why nationalism (or political identity) takes the forms it does in particular places. Malcolm Yapp[1] examines writing on identity and nationalism, classing the theories into four kinds—natural, unnatural, reactive and modernising. While each type has its skillful proponents and the arguments of each can be applied to India, Yapp argues that modernising theories—those depending on a contrast between tradition and modernity plus the role of language and religion in helping bridge the gap between them—are the most useful. As this paper is not a review of theories of political identity, but an examination of how Goan identity and self-image developed over the last forty years, from the time India gained

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**Panoramic in its scope, this review of the evolving definition of the Goan identity appeared in the journal* South Asia *(Vol.77, No.1, Jan. 1989) under the title:* 'Konkani Mai Ascends the Throne: The Cultural Basis of Goan Statehood'. *Mr Newman, an anthropologist, was on the faculty of La Trobe University, Australia till recently.*

independence to the time Goa became a full-fledged state within India, I shall take Paul Brass' wider concepts of primordial and instrumental identity to underpin my discussion.[2] 'Primordial' identifications emerge from one's principal cultural identity and may exist "in the unconscious realms of the adult personality"[3], while 'instrumental' identity is chosen out of the large number of possible cultural identities because it seems to offer the greatest chance of political success.[4] In Goa, as elsewhere, the actual situation does not provide pure examples of either kind of identity, but mixtures which tend towards one pole or the other.

Brass illustrates the two views as follows in a South Asian context: "From the primordialist point of view...Hindus and Muslims constituted in pre-modern times distinct civilisations destined to develop into separate nations once political mobilisation took place. The differences between the two cultures were so great that it was not conceivable that assimilation of the two could take place and that a single national culture could be created to which both would contribute. The contrary view is that cultural and religious differences between Hindus and Muslims were not so great as to rule out the creation of either a composite national culture or...a secular political union in which those aspects of group culture that could not be shared would be relegated to the private sphere."[5]

In Goa, the Portuguese colonialist rulers as well as most literary and scholarly figures took a largely primordial view of Goan identity.

Caroline Ifeka[6] wrote on the image of 'Golden Goa' or Goa *Dourada* that grew up in the small territory over time. She mainly discusses the early centuries, concluding that the Goa *Dourada* image that sees Goa as a European enclave clinging to the vast Indian subcontinent must be challenged and a new image of Goan culture built, "...one that emphasises the Indian contribution to Goan identity," because the real Goa is Goa *Indica*.[7]

Goa *Indica* can be seen as a more instrumental view of Goa while still recognising many primordial characteristics. The religious and cultural differences seen as so insurmountable by Portuguese and elite Goans are indeed "not so great as to rule out the creation of a composite Goan culture". Therefore, the second aim of this paper is to discuss the nature of Goa *Indica*, to examine the cultural basis of Goa's statehood and set forth what makes Goa a coherent region deserving to be an Indian state, other than having large numbers of activists who demanded it. (The question of whether ethnic and linguistic states are beneficial to late 20th century India will not be addressed.)

## Part I: Changing Phases of Self Perception

Goa languished for centuries under Portuguese colonial rule. The Portuguese government did little besides maintain order. Economic development was minimal, educational opportunities were lacking for the majority of people, and political liberties lagged far behind those available in the British territories across the border. These conditions turned Goa into a land from which its people migrated and went into exile. Men sought work and higher education in Bangalore, Belgaum, Calcutta, Karachi and above all, Bombay, where a huge Goan colony still reflects the impoverished conditions that prevailed in Portuguese Goa. Gaining English language skills and familiarity with British bureaucratic or industrial procedures, Goans moved out of India to government and private sector jobs in British colonies in East Africa and onto British passenger ships as stewards, cooks and crew. Goans who resented the authoritarian, censoring ways of Salazarist Portugal became political exiles, usually also in British India, where they founded the Goa National Congress in 1928. Migration and exile for thousands of families and more thousands of single men created and sustained a nostalgic longing for a beautiful but, perhaps, imaginary Goa that was talked and sung about from Kampala to Macau. Goa was the special golden homeland of swaying coconut palms in the moonlight, of tasty dishes like *sorpatel-sanna* and *bangdda recheado*, of violins and the *mando*, whitewashed churches, *intruz*, *ladainha*, and red, fertile soil. The Portuguese, many of whom genuinely fell in love with the place, helped to maintain this image too...Goa *Dourada*, golden Goa. But, in addition to being a land of little economic opportunity, 19th and 20th century Goa was a land of rebellion and frequent bloodshed. Goans were never passive or submissive, even if many (as in every other European colony) cooperated with the ruling powers. The peaceful, 'golden' image was a product of nostalgia, wishful thinking and propaganda.

The Catholic elite wanted to imagine themselves as apart from India, more a cultivated branch of a worldwide Portuguese civilisation. Up to 1947, the Portuguese perception of Goa still reigned supreme among Catholic Goans, at least those who were educated. The Portuguese radio station, *Emissora de Goa*, opened each broadcast with "*Aqui Portugal*" (This is Portugal), and indeed, Portuguese perceptions were just that. For example, J de Freitas, writing in 1960, remarks, "...the Goan has created a life-style that is *sui generis* different in many ways from ours in Europe, but totally distanced, by an insoluble problem of mentality, from that followed by the inhabitants of neighbouring India..."[8] Goa was seen as part of the

Lusitanian world; Portuguese-speaking, Catholic, with fondnesses for *fado*, festivals, football and Fatima, not to mention wine.

Goan postage stamps, for example, depicted Catholic, Portuguese themes without a single hint that Goa was in India, had a majority of Hindu citizens, and very few Portuguese speakers.*

The stamps accurately reflected the image favoured by Portugal, an image accepted by many Goan Catholics, that Goa was distinct from India and no assimilation would ever be possible.

Though religious discrimination in Goa did decrease after the Republic of 1910 in Portugal, "the Portuguese policy of suppressing the local language and enforcing the Portuguese tongue on Goans never underwent a great change during the four and a half centuries of their rule".[9] Konkani was downgraded and scorned as a crude 'native' language of no importance. As a consequence, Konkani did not develop a literature as full as other Indian languages, and for lack of official policy, four scripts were used to write it, further dividing Goans. The term '*Konknno*' was used to describe uncultured hicks and often had an anti-Hindu sense as well. Portuguese was made the language of culture and education: those who mastered it might go to study in Portugal and reach extremely high office in the mother country or in other colonies. Both Hindu and Catholic elites, as opposed to the common people, turned to other languages: the Catholics to Portuguese, most Hindus to Marathi.

Educated Hindus often identified with the ancient and intricate traditions of neighbouring Maharashtra—the music, poetry and arts associated with bhakti; the exploits of Shivaji, saints like Ramdas and Tukaram—while educated Catholics looked to Camoes, Eça de Queiroz, Pessoa, and the glories of the Age of Exploration in the 16th century. The images held by both educated elites, Catholic and Hindu, reflected the influence of their classical literatures and the results of centuries of colonial indoctrination. By insisting on Goa's being Catholic and Portuguese, the colonial rulers forced the Hindus ever further towards glorifying the past and adopting the regional culture of neighbouring Maharashtra. The same process prevented the Goan Catholic elite from recognising its own Indian-ness and encouraged cultural dependence on Europe, the perceived centre of learning and civilisation. Such dependence could never, for the majority, be more than a superficial smattering of Portuguese or Western cultural traits. In this way, many Goan Hindus came to define themselves as Maharashtrian, Marathi-speakers, while many Goan Catholics thought of themselves as (variously) Western, Portuguese-speakers, or non-Indians.

The Portuguese neglect and suppression of Konkani has had repercussions up to the present time, while it must be admitted that their divide and rule tactics certainly worked, since educated Goans did not share among themselves even a common perception of their land, history and culture. However, the majority of Goans, Catholic and Hindu, remained untouched by questions of language or Westernisation. They simply lived in their traditional way, speaking Konkani, within a common socio-economic system, with similar and overlapping religious beliefs and world view. We shall return to this subject in the second half of the paper.

The next part of the essay is organised along historical lines, based around three milestones: starting from 1947, the year of Indian independence, when Goa was still part of the Portuguese imperium; moving to 1967, year of the opinion poll that showed with dramatic, decisive certitude that Goans wanted to maintain their separate identity; and finally stopping at 1987, the year of statehood. Since events in one year are obviously related to what has gone before there are 'interim' sections to link the three milestones.

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**Editor's Note: In 1851, there were 2,189 Catholics and 128,824 Hindus in Goa—63.82 percent and 35.41 percent respectively, of the total population. The numbers were almost equal in 1900, with 262,648 Catholics and 260,144 Hindus. The Catholic population started decreasing in real terms thereafter, whilst that of the Hindus rose steadily. By 1950, there were only 230,984 Catholics (42.20 percent) as against 307,127 Hindus (56.10 percent). In 1961, the Catholics numbered even less (227,202 or 38.07 percent) whereas the Hindu population soared to 384,378 (59.92 percent). The Catholic population has increased in real terms since the Liberation, though it has become progressively smaller as a percentage of the total populace. The 1971 census counted 270,126 Catholics (33.97 percent) and 496,389 Hindus (62.43 percent); in 1981 the figures were 315,902 (31.25 percent) as against 646,986 (64.20 percent); and whilst the break up for 1991 is not yet available, it is estimated that Catholics comprised 28 percent and the Hindus 68 percent of the total population at the start of this decade. (Sources:* Gazetteer of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, *Govt. of G, D&D, 1979;* Annuario Estatistico, Estado da India, *Portuguese colonial administration; and Statistical Pocket Books, Govt. of G, D&D, yearly.)*

## 1947—Indian Independence

As India won independence and moved onto the world stage as a major new power in Asia, there was no sign that anything had changed or would soon change in Goa. The Salazar regime paid no attention to either appeals from Gandhi or satyagrahi led by Dr Lohia. Though 1947 was a year of change for the rest of India, in Goa the Portuguese pretended that nothing could shake their historic rule. Up to 1910, their rule had been utterly pro-Catholic, denying Hindus and Muslims the right to attend Portuguese schools and the right to be employed in government service. Even after the Republic was declared in 1910, very few non-Catholics enjoyed the benefits of a public service job. As India gained freedom, the Portuguese began measures to bring non-Catholic Goans into their employ or into the professions. As Indian pressure mounted over the next fourteen years, Portuguese efforts in this direction increased, all far too little, too late.

From 1947, Goa felt a steadily increasing crescendo of pressure against Portuguese rule. Satyagrahi from India, mostly non-Goans, were shot, beaten and imprisoned by the Portuguese army. "The period between 1955 and the Liberation (1961) is full of cruelties, mischief, and murders that the Portuguese...committed in order to save their Empire in the East."[10] Goa is so small that it was easy for the Portuguese to exercise nearly total control—jailing or exiling anyone who protested against them. A large number of Goans, centred in Bombay, carried on the struggle to expel the Portuguese by mainly diplomatic-political means. They formed a number of groups, including the National Congress (Goa), the Goan People's Party, the United Front of Goans, the Azad Gomantak Dal, the Goa Ashram, the Goa Action Committee, and the Goa Liberation Council.[11] "The splinter groups of freedom fighters...made no attempt at any stage during the years 1954 to the end of 1961, to come together and present a unified front."[12] They remained sunk in petty rivalries. It is extremely important to note that large numbers of those in the forefront of the liberation movement were Catholics, indeed many who spoke Portuguese or had been educated in Portugal.[13]

Between the 1940s an 1961, the tide of pro-Indian sentiment rose in Goa (though there were some Goans who talked of an autonomous entity, apart from India). The stone-headed authoritarianism of the aging Salazar's regime grew increasingly odious. P D Gaitonde, a Goan surgeon married to a Portuguese (and who served time in jail in Portugal), wrote that at the time: "As far as I could judge, most people in Goa were in favour of integration with the rest of India.

There was therefore no question of any deep-seated pro-Portuguese feelings in Goa."[14] He went on to say that about 200 privileged families did support Portugal and the Portuguese gave great play to their sentiments in international forums.[15] I think, however, that Gaitonde rather underestimated the support enjoyed by Portugal, though nowhere near a majority of Goans were actively pro-Portuguese. Given the cultural and religious perceptions already discussed and the economic advantages of Goa's duty-free import policy in the 1950s, the new opportunities for education, employment and pensions, if many Catholic Goans wished for a freer political atmosphere, they did not necessarily burn with desire to give up their privileges and share the economic fortunes of India, which at that time were not bright.

## First Interim—Growing Self-Awareness

The cultural situation and Goan self-perceptions underwent many changes in the years between 1947 and 1967. The Portuguese, up to their last days, were still devising plans to induce Goans to learn Portuguese and they still hoped that Goan Hindus might become Catholics, given sufficient motivation. The result of this policy, never backed up with sufficient educational facilities, was that while the Brahmin elites among both Catholics and Hindus learned Portuguese, the common people learned Marathi or English, if they went to school at all. When the last Governor General, Manuel Antonio Vassalo e Silva toured rural Goa, he was dismayed to find large numbers of English-language primary schools affiliated to the Bombay Board of Education while Portuguese primary schools were scarce. "He could only communicate with the school children in English. But, most of all, he was very disagreeably surprised at the existence of Marathi schools in every village, however small. He found that these children were supposed to learn Marathi at a very early age, before attending any Portuguese or English school. And worse still, the alphabet used was the Devnagari."[16]

Gaitonde wrote: "...the clear aim of the Portuguese Government in Goa was to change Goans in such a way that they should regard a foreign language like Portuguese as their own; forget their history, their culture, their sentiments and behave in every way like Portuguese. They had forgotten that this had been tried in earlier times by their forefathers, using every method at their disposal, including force, but without much success. Undoubtedly, there had been a small percentage of Goans who, in past centuries, had been denationalised, but they were now trying to re-integrate themselves into the mainstream of Indian life."[17]

When Liberation finally came, in 1961, it happened virtually overnight. After the initial shock, Goa began the real process of integration into India, from which it had been politically separated for 451 years. The Indian Army quickly handed over power to civilians. Economic and political developments begin immediately. Within two years, Goa had a popularly-elected government under the leadership of D B Bandodkar, a rich mine owner and 'social worker'. His government was in power for the twentieth anniversary of India's independence, twenty years during which Goans' perceptions of themselves had been called into question more than ever.

Class consciousness can be said to arise from many people in a society sharing common interests and a common experience. Such consciousness is often moulded at times of social upheaval. For example, the origins of the English working class as a class stem from being pushed or pulled off the land and into the cities to work in terrible conditions for low reward. I would argue that changed or enhanced ethnic and regional consciousness can also arise from socio-economic or political upheaval. As mentioned at the start of this paper, Yapp points out that as societies make the transition from traditional to more modern structures, identity can undergo many changes.

Even if Goans, as landlords, peasants, officials or labourers, had primordial feelings about 'being Goan' for centuries, their identity as such often appears to have been subordinate to caste or simple religious status. They were Goans only as opposed to 'Europeans' and 'Indians'. Between 1947 and 1967, however, three things occurred which heightened Goan self-awareness or developed a nascent demand to be recognised as a separate people. First was the freedom struggle. It forced many Catholic intellectuals and thoughtful people to come to terms with their Indian-ness. They had to ask themselves who they were. Most accepted that they were Indian, not Western, rejecting centuries of Portuguese indoctrination to the contrary. Part of a poem by Telo de Mascarenhas illustrates what were not uncommon sentiments:

*This land is ours,*
*legitimately ours,*
*an old inheritance,*
*we are proud of her.*
*We struggled and suffered*
*to liberate her.*
*In the bosom of Mother India*

*we want to live,*
*because we are her legitimate sons;*
*for the sake of unity*
*we will not let anyone subvert*
*our identity.*[18]

The 'Indian' identity adopted and hoisted as a banner by many of the Catholic elite, however, was instrumental, often based on Gandhian interpretations of Indian culture. It was not rooted in any particular region of India, hence it resembled the vaguely 'Indian', politically selected identity of other sections of the subcontinental elite. Apart from these somewhat romantic declarations of Indianness, the Goan Catholic elite remained quintessentially Goan, but without any other image of that status than the old Goa *Dourada* one. Goan writing in this period, and after 1967 as well, only too often reflected the Goa *Dourada* image. The selections in Nazareth (1983), for example, only infrequently question the 'golden Goa' view of the homeland. The Goan Hindus had no trouble in identifying with India. They had done so for centuries, often at considerable cost. But the freedom struggle threw them together with educated Catholics and gave both a rare common objective. Both groups gained new perceptions of the other and themselves as Goan.

The second factor that heightened or developed Goan awareness was, of course, the Liberation itself. The Portuguese power was destroyed and soon the Portuguese themselves, along with most Eurasians (called *descendentes*) and many of the most pro-Portuguese Goan officials and families, sailed away to Portugal, thereby eliminating, at a stroke, the most virulent proponents of Goa as 'non-Indian' or 'European'. Goa was occupied by the Indian Army, which on the whole was well-behaved, and by numbers of Indian bureaucrats. With the best will in the world, these two groups could only serve as foils for locals to realise that though Goans might be Indian, they had a regional identity of their own. From the start, some Goans felt that this identity had to be asserted or it would be submerged.

Finally, economic changes began immediately the Portuguese were expelled. The vast scale of all such changes is outside the scope of this paper. Change continues to be rapid up to the present and Goa has been transformed from a sleepy traditional-colonial society to a bustling bourgeois-capitalist one. New classes have risen, old ones have declined or disappeared. The age-old dominance of the upper castes, especially Brahmins, among both Hindus and Catholics, has been challenged as never before. Their particular images of Goa, their dictat as to what is 'Goan', have also been questioned but not

seriously as yet. Established ways of life and modes of conduct have been threatened or transformed. The youth, like their counterparts in so much of the world, began, from 1962, to live in a different world than their parents had known. The pace of change has only increased over the years. Economic and social turmoil produce political upheaval and in Goa's case, this was accompanied by the rise of a new Goan consciousness demanding recognition and preservation of what was Goan before all was swept away in the flood of changes. The new consciousness, however, did not produce a definite and widely accepted instrumental identity, neither could it rely on primordial identities without creating serious friction along religious lines. Thus, up to 1967, the new Goan identity was not well developed, nor had it gained much recognition.

## 1967—The Opinion Poll

Goan politics in the 1960s still reflected both primordial and instrumental identities. Political parties and political life were, above all, concerned with whether Goa should remain a separate region of India with its own identity or be merged with neighbouring Maharashtra and disappear forever. The debate on this issue dominated Goan politics to such a degree that parties based on issues of any other sort—economic development, cultural reconstruction, ecology and, especially, ownership of the means of production and resources, and capital-labour relationships—never arose. This situation was created by colonial rule, both through favouring some groups over others for political and economic benefits and through the description and definitions of Goan society produced by government, church and intellectuals and given to Goans as 'fact' or 'truth'.

Almost every author over the last century who described Goan society wrote as if it were composed of discreet units, quite separate from one another. Hindus, Catholics and Muslims succeed one another on their pages, usually sub-divided according to caste group, whose peculiarities of dress, food, occupation and religious or daily ritual are painstakingly listed. Portuguese writers followed this pattern throughout—Braganza Pereira (1923), Gonsalves Pereira (1954), Soeiro de Brito (1966), and Feio (1979). Of these, only the last made very minor reference to facts that might draw a reader to conclude that religious and caste boundaries are not ironclad. Writers in English on Goa have not differed much. Up to the present day, most of the scholarly literature on Goan society paints a picture of Goa as a conglomeration of separate communities.

That these divisions exist is undeniable, but the question is one of interpretation, and the general way in which Westerners have long examined and analysed Goan society or, on a larger plane, South Asian societies. The communal nature of Indian politics in this century, besides its relationship to modernisation, is directly related to the British (and Portuguese) divide and rule approach to Indian society as well as to the tendency of Western nationalist sentiment to label different religions and customs as hallmarks of different peoples, who thus require separate but equal access to power.

Former British India had already gone far down this road, starting from the division of Bengal in the early years of the century, proceeding through separate electoral rolls for Muslims, Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans, and Sikhs (and demands heard for further separations), winding up in the holocaust and bitter division of Partition. By 1961, independent India had organised linguistic states and, although separate communal franchises were abolished, politicians had utilised previously existing structures and sentiment to build communalist parties in every corner of the country. Goa could not escape.

The Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) or 'Maharashtrian Goa Party' was formed in June, 1963 during a period of great confusion in the Indian National Congress, Goa branch.[19] While the Indian National Congress, the all-India party, dithered on the question of Goa's future, the National Congress (Goa) which had been in existence since 1946, dissolved itself and formed the MGP "with the avowed objective of fighting the [1963] elections on the merger platform".[20] Essentially, this new party denied the existence of a Goan regional culture. It echoed the Portuguese claim that Konkani was a non-language, a useless dialect of crude toddy tappers and fishermen, a mere minor variant of Marathi.

The MGP claimed to represent the oppressed Hindu lower castes and strove to garner votes by attacking Hindu Brahmins and the Catholic community. It sought to discredit everything that pointed to a separate Goan culture. Disowning the Goa *Dourada* image was not sufficient, Goa itself had to be denied. The MGP appealed to the poorest and least literate sections of the population. Though an anti-Brahmin assertion of lower caste and lower class rights could be seen, in part, as an ideological struggle, the MGP did not adopt revolutionary rhetoric. It exploited the fact that though all Goans had suffered under Portuguese colonialism, particularly low caste Hindus who "had lived in almost semi-feudal conditions under the Portuguese,...were exploited to some extent by the caste Hindus, and were not happy with [Portuguese religious policy]".[21]

With the MGP taking an anti-Konkani, caste and religion-based mergerist position designed to wipe Goa off the cultural and political map, it is not surprising that the main opposition too was not an ideological party (given also the total disarray of the Congress party). The United Goan Party (UGP) took the stand that (1) Goa had its own identity, (2) that identity went beyond any one caste or religious community, (3) that Konkani should be developed as a proper vehicle for Goan cultural identity, and (4) Goa should never be merged with Maharashtra. Attempts were made to practise what they preached, viz. "out of 24 candidates (in 1963) set up to contest the Assembly seats, eight were Hindus and one Muslim".[22] The communalist polarisation was begun and propagated by the MGP, though it was inevitable that many people would think of the UGP as basically a Catholic party.

These two parties symbolised, in political form, the views and identities held by Goans in the early 1960s. Neither attempted to build a new image of Goa or create a positive political identity. The MGP wanted only to tear down what existed while the UGP did not go beyond general 'liberal' platitudes that Goan identity did not belong to any particular sub-group. The real test of where sympathies lay on the issue of Goan identity came on 16 January, 1967. After a long campaign, fiercely argued among the proponents of merger and separate identity, the Government of India held an Opinion Poll on the question of Goa's future. Voters had to choose between merger with Maharashtra or continuing as a Union Territory. Other options, such as statehood, independence, or merger with Karnataka (then Mysore), were not offered. Even though the same voters had returned an MGP government in 1963, when it came to terminating Goa's separate identity, they seemed to hesitate. Over three days of high drama, Goa's future as a politically separate region of India was sealed as 54 per cent of the people voted to remain a Union Territory.

Sarto Esteves captures something of the mood at the time. The day after the Poll, "...Goans rushed in large numbers to Panjim to witness the counting of votes at the Menezes Braganza Institute. The crowd of nearly 25,000 included men, women, students and workers. Braving the burning sun, they stuck to their spots till the close of the count on each day for three days, cheering wildly as the results were announced."[23] R.K. Saksena, writing of the occasion, says: "The people expressed their pleasure [in good order]. They danced on the roads, embraced each other, smeared colours and wept out of joy. Their victory was great and their emotions were uncontrollable. Thousands of crackers boomed across the river Mandovi..."[24]

Sixteen out of 28 electoral districts voted for Union Territory status. Though Goans today remember the Opinion Poll as a time of drama and emotion, and some Catholics patronisingly say things to the effect of "our Hindus voted against the outsiders when the chips were down", it must be said that it was a close call, not an overwhelming victory. Many voters spoiled their ballot and a large percentage of the electorate did not vote. Things might have been different. Whatever the case, the 1967 Opinion Poll represents a major milestone on Goa's march to statehood. After it, there was no turning back. Though the MGP and its mergerist, anti-Konkani, Marathi chauvinist position continued to dominate local politics for another twelve years, its original *raison d'etre* was gradually reduced to token slogans and insistence on using Marathi at public gatherings.

Esteves' analysis of the anti-merger victory is interesting. He attributes it to the fact that "the leaders of the Anti-Merger Front, consisting of citizens from all walks of life, saw to it from the very inception that its doors were kept open to Goans of all religions, castes, sub-castes, Scheduled Castes and Tribes and also to citizens from all parts of the Territory...The Front included not only Congressmen, United Goans and others but also representatives of communities like *Mahar*, *Chamar*, *Kunbi* and *Gavde* (lower castes)...The large number of voters who voted against merger in what were considered ...strongholds of mergerites, fully confirms the non-communal, non-sectarian, representative character of the anti-merger forces."[25]

However, there were other factors that must have played a part in inducing many potential mergerist voters to change their minds. For example, if Goa were to be merged with Maharashtra, liquor laws would have changed and thousands of toddy tappers would have been put out of their livelihood. Goa would have become a small, remote district of a big state; investment, jobs and long-protected opportunities would have disappeared. Government servants could have been transferred hundreds of miles away from home. Central government pay scales would have been replaced by the lower Maharashtra ones. Because merger was defeated, none of these things happened. Over the next twenty years, people came to take Goa's separateness more for granted. The political expression of Goan identity came to revolve around two issues: language and what we may call the 'locals vs outsiders' issues.

## Second Interim—Big Business behind the Scenes

The interim between the Opinion Poll and Statehood, as far as the development of Goan identity and culture goes, was a period of confusion, turmoil, conflict and inaction. The MGP leader, Bandodkar, raised his daughter, Shashikala Kakodkar, to high political power and on his death in 1973, she became the chief minister in his place, continuing in office up to 1979. Both, father and daughter, in addition to insisting that Marathi was the rightful language of Goa, talked often about 'Bahujan Samaj' or the lower strata of society. Though this section of society certainly improved its lot over the years after Liberation, central government funds and the general transformation of Goa from colonial to bourgeois-capitalist society undoubtedly played a larger role in the process than MGP action.

Goa houses a number of big business families with fingers in almost every pie.[26] The MGP rule benefitted these families, permitting them to continue expansion into fishing, mining, ore processing, manufacturing, and import-export. A few other capitalists, Goan and Indians from other states, also enjoyed the sympathy of the MGP. When popular protests arose over issues such as the severe pollution caused by an agro-chemical plant or the displacement of traditional fishermen and destruction of their livelihood, the MGP unflinchingly took the side of big business[27] and tried to suppress the protests.

The experiences and awareness emerging from the protest movements, the continuing neglect of the poorer sections of Goan society, the influx of thousands of even poorer labourers from beyond Goa's borders, the land grabs of industry, mining, and big tourist complexes, the failure of land reform or the mismanagement of what was legislated, the continuing large-scale pollution of land and water by iron ore tailings and the inordinate power of bus owners in the halls of government led, by 1979, to the formation of the People's Democratic Front. This group appealed to Goans across all communal lines and called for action on ideological rather than caste or sectarian grounds. It had no great success, but it is cited here as a first glimpse of a new image of Goa on the horizon.

During the same period, the *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (Konkani Language Group), worked for the extension and development of the language spoken by about 90 per cent of all Goans. It long remained a small group of intellectuals unable to pressure the government to do anything, especially an MGP government still mouthing outworn pro-Marathi slogans. The People's Democratic Front also supported Konkani. In a broadsheet handed out in March, 1979, on the streets of Panjim, calling for anti-government demonstrations, the Front

said: "The Konkani language, which is the language of all the people of this Territory, should be the prime criterion while granting employment both in the public and private sectors, so that first preference is given to the sons of the soil." Goan identity, not yet firmly established, was already defining itself by excluding people whose exclusion was to some political or economic advantage.

In the meantime, Konkani had hardly been developed. The MGP government did nothing for Goa's long-neglected language, but Goans themselves were ambivalent. Only a small number of Goans ever favoured Konkani as the medium of instruction in schools, most preferring English or Marathi. As opposed to what they said in public, the way Goans behaved was and still is even less favourable to Konkani. In 1986, out of 1537 primary schools in Goa, only fifteen used Konkani, while 984 were conducted in Marathi, the other 538 being mainly in English or Urdu.[28]

The Congress (I) government that came to power after Kakodkar's fall in 1979 has been in office ever since (till the time of writing). One could trace the long history of struggles over Konkani and the inexorable rise of 'Goa for Goans' sentiment[29] as workers from neighbouring states poured in to benefit from Goa's high living standards and job opportunities. At the same time, the steady migration of Goans continued, to the Gulf, to join relatives in the Anglophone countries of the industrialised world, and to Bombay or to Bangalore to work in the modern sector of Indian industry or business. The Congress (I) government was content not to rock the boat, doing only what was politically necessary. Nothing was done to settle the language question.

Looking back at the changes in Goa's image and identity over the years, we find a slow but steady change.

During the Portuguese period, Goans saw themselves as oppressed or colonised people, but some identified with India while others felt closer to a Luso-Indian ideal. A romantic and realistic 'primordial' image of 'golden Goa' captivated a certain section of the Goan Catholic and Portuguese elite, particularly intellectuals.

Throughout the colonial period, Goans (and Indians) were defined consistently on sectarian, caste, and linguistic lines by their rulers for very self-seeking reasons. As freedom to mobilise politically grew, so did the Western-derived tendency to mobilise along communal lines.

I say 'Western-derived' because the British government created communal electorates and because British rulers and intellectuals consistently emphasised the diversity of society in the subcontinent

instead of asking what had kept Indian civilisation together for millennia and had prevented the rise of nation states. Jonah Raskin writes, for example, that "(Rudyard) Kipling suggests the heterogeneity of India. He saw no dominant single culture in the land."

To E M Foster too, "India is an enigma. A hundred Indians, a million Indias. Diversity...Foster is uncertain what to make of this subcontinent. It is chaotic, confusing, irritating. Nothing ruled out in clear lines, with sharp boundaries...Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Brahmins, Untouchables. The catalogue of Indian castes, religions and sects would stretch around the globe..."[30]

This was the paramount fact to both British and Portuguese, for the Portuguese saw India (from the evidence of their writing), as did the British, to be a land lacking in 'cohesion'—that is, without a tradition of ethnically based nation states, usually having a single religion. They never tried to see what was common to India. They were victims of their own basic premise that homogeneity was the norm and that real nations were not heterogeneous. Indians and Goans were, of course, conscious of the differences among themselves. We cannot pretend otherwise. But they have not formed political identities or a self-image along linguistic and religious lines.

As India gained freedom, Goans too began to assert their political identity as Indians and 'children of Mother India'. The Indian Army and the bureaucrats who swiftly arrived after 1961 provided a contrast startling enough for many Goans to define themselves as 'Goans' vis-a-vis some 'Indian' stereotype. In the years just after Liberation, Goan identity went through a 'split personality' period with politicians trying to gather various caste or religious groups around themselves to win power. Goa's image was still mostly romantic and sentimental, but its rising economic prospects and general well-being helped create a new image of a prosperous, small territory without many of the problems that beset other parts of India.

Goans liked to think of their land as especially favoured. After Bandodkar's death, though, in this second 'interim period' between 1967 and 1987, most of the problems found elsewhere in India emerged in Goa too—corruption, pollution, exploitation, overcrowding, and language or religion-based disturbances. A large number of Goans came to see Goa as a threatened place, very different from the image of the peaceful haven that lasted so long. Some people even began to identify themselves as Goans first, rather than members of a particular religious or caste group. Their number is still small. We might construct a chart to summarise the historical process discussed here.

## 1987—Official Language and Statehood

The forces in Goan society that had been involved in the unsuccessful People's Democratic Front and *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* found a much stronger vehicle when they coalesced around language and ethnocentric feelings. The fears of being submerged in their own traditional home helped create the *Konkani Porjecho Avaz* (KPA) which, in the words of one Goan observer, carried on protracted agitation for Konkani and Statehood, helping to "highlight the problem[s] not only to the rulers in New Delhi but also to a large section of Goans themselves".[31]

The situation began to snowball and went out of control, culminating in the destructive riots of December, 1986 that caused one death. (A near total breakdown of law and order allowed a village feud to claim six more lives.) As Goa reeled from its first major upheaval since Liberation and the language agitation still continued, the Goa government rushed an already tabled Official Language Bill through the Assembly, passing it on 4 February, 1987. Konkani was given sole official status, though the bill allowed Marathi to be used at the discretion of 'the administrator'.

Neither the active proponents of Marathi or Konkani were wholly satisfied, but the common man appeared to feel that justice had been done. After centuries of suppression by the Portuguese and 25 years of neglect by Goan governments, Konkani Mai (Mother Konkani) ascended her rightful throne at last. The self-evident fact that Goans speak Konkani had been recognised. Statehood was the next step, as *O Heraldo* pointed out some weeks later.

"When the Official Language Bill making Konkani the exclusive official language of...Goa was passed,...the first blow was struck for the preservation of the Goan identity. Now, with an indication from the Centre that Statehood for Goa is imminent and may be secured during the current session of Parliament, the task of reinforcing the unique and separate identity of *amchem bhangarachem Goem* (`our golden Goa'—still!) is in the process of completion. Konkani is the soul of the red soil of Goa. Statehood will be the body which will provide a home for the soul. For, only with Statehood will the unique identity of Goa be guaranteed forever. For, only Statehood will give a permanent burial to the ghost of merger with Maharashtra."[32]

Goa was granted Statehood on 31 May, 1987, with Konkani as its official language. Although the writer of the editorial just quoted argued that Statehood would guarantee Goa's identity, I do not feel so sanguine. Rather than develop the rich and ancient veins of gold

in Goan culture, Goan intellectuals have been content to continue composing odes to 'Golden Goa', at least metaphorically speaking. Meanwhile, Goan identity often continues to be narrowly instrumental, delineated by politicians and journalists who define 'who we are not' rather than 'who we are'. This is a common trait of all nascent nationalisms or ethnic revivals, but given the depressing catalogue of conflict engendered by such phenomena, the future is anything but golden unless Goans can develop an identity which can include all 'sons of the soil' and give them confidence to meet other Indians on an equal footing.

The contradictory images of 'Golden Goa' as also a state 'under threat' have not gone away. No sooner did the threat of merger with Maharashtra disappear, after a quarter of a century of struggle, than the new threat was perceived - the 30% of Goa's population originating in other states. M V Kamath, writing in Goa Today, says, "A time is bound to come when the peculiar identity of the Goan would have been lost. The Goan-to-be would then be an amalgam of Konkani and non-Konkani cultures. I am not sure at this stage whether the transformation would be painless or accompanied by much suffering. The ultimate 'Indian' no doubt will some day have to emerge."[33]

It seems to me that Goan culture and identity are stronger than what is implied here. Having lasted (encompassing changes) for centuries, it will not be lost in a few decades. Goans have money, they have a good number of educated people and most of all, they have an abiding, strong (primordial) love of their beautiful little region of India. Goa certainly deserved to be a state. It comprises a compact geo-cultural region with a common language and history. There is also a basic foundation of common culture—Goa *Indica*—the image never developed, the identity never grasped to the bosom of the mainly Brahmin, Westernised intellectuals.

Goa *Indica*, it appears to me, is the ideal instrumental identity for Goa, the way in which the majority of Goans can be bound together for political stability, providing in addition, the avenue for the absorption of the 'newcomers' who are 'non-Goan' today but whose children must surely be Goan tomorrow for Goa has absorbed outsiders before and managed to retain its own identity. The common Goan culture still exists, though under strong pressure from Western style media and education. Most Goans still participate in that culture, even if they have never written about it.

## Part II: Cultural Basis of Regional Identity

Circumstances have always been against the emergence of Goa *Indica* as opposed to Goa *Dourada*. First, the society is divided by caste and class, with two major religious groups and one minor one (Islam). Goa's multilingual nature, too, is beyond question. Second, there is a long history of oppression, including the Inquisition, and discrimination by Catholics (both Portuguese and Goan) against the others. Third, upper class landlords and government officials during colonial times and landlords, industrialists and businessmen in recent times have exploited the lower or working classes—tenants, miners, dockworkers, toddy tappers, servants, factory hands, waiters and drivers, for example—so that alternative images or views of Goa have been very slow to emerge. The class interests of the opposing groups have long been far apart and some of the so-called freedom struggles of the past were really attempts by powerful landed clans to exploit their erstwhile 'subjects' without Portuguese interference.

Finally, the Western style education pursued in Goa, both in colonial and modern times, has never allowed any place for Goan cultural studies. Pupils today learn Goan geography and a potted history, but the nature of Goan society is not discussed to avoid offending powerful groups.

Paradoxically, as Goa has won increasing freedom to assert its identity and establish the image it wants of itself, increasing Westernisation has blurred educated Goans' vision of their own society and led them to look outward, away from Goa. Emigration, films, television, sports and above all, schooling, have prevented the development of a new image of Goa, a new Goan identity. Schools have oriented students towards jobs which are mainly found outside Goa. The whole nature of the new consumerist, bourgeois-capitalist society in Goa pushes Goans to emigrate in search of higher wages despite having one of the highest per capita income rates in India. (Though one reason for the high level of income may be remittances from abroad.) Constantly looking outwards, Goans, particularly youth, often pay little attention to their own heritage.

Yet underneath the surface conflict and diversity concentrated on by many Western and Western-influenced Indian writers, Goa has basic, common roots from which the image of Goa *Indica* could grow. I would like to mention areas in particular which underpin a Goan identity and could provide a new, solid image: economic, historical, kinship, and cultural-linguistic.

## Shared Economic System

The Brahmins and *Chardos* (Kshatriya) of both major religions are usually the dominant castes of their villages and traditionally controlled the village associations, the *gaunkari* or comunidades. As professionals, public servants and shopkeepers as well as landowners, they predominate among the urban middle and upper classes too. It is their culture and image of Goa which has always been described and idealised as 'Goan culture'. Though the Census of India provides no statistics on caste, various sources indicate that Sudhras make up most of the village population, along with the *Gavda* or *Kunbi* groups.[34] The farmers, fishermen, toddy tappers, craftsmen, tenant-cultivators and labourers as well as the bulk of urban populations belong to these groups.

Despite differing religious affiliations, the people of this class share common life experiences and a common relationship with the dominant groups. Given their large numbers, one could argue that it is their folk culture that is Goan culture. The knowledge of life they gain from experience leads these Goans to symbolise that experience in a different way from either classical Hindu or classical Catholic patterns. This folk culture is a synthesis of Hindu and Catholic elements and as such is similar to other Indian regional folk cultures, cultures that are now being torn apart by the reorganisations of society on ethno-linguistic or sectarian lines and by political alignment on the same bases. The flower of Goa *Indica* will be found here, not in the stylised, imported garden of Goa *Dourada*.

## Common History

It is obvious that people whose ancestors have lived in the same place for generations share a common history. What I want to refer to here is a particular aspect of that history.

The fierce opposition to the original onslaught of the Portuguese—their smashing of temples, their forced conversions, their massacres and expulsions, the Inquisition—has had repercussions that still echo in the villages of both Old and New Conquests. (Goa is divided in two sections, one which came under Portuguese control in the 16th century, the other, mainly inland, in the 18th century.) Temple statues were spirited away from the fury of the Catholic invaders and re-erected by Hindus in new temples in neighbouring lands not under Portuguese control. Later, these lands too came under Portuguese rule. Churches were usually erected on the sites of former temples, sometimes even incorporating the same building ma-

terials or (as at Reis Magos, for example) Hindu-built staircases with decorative mythological animals.

If subaltern studies-style research were to be done on Goa, one rich vein of material would be found in the laws and prohibitions of the Inquisition. For example, edicts were published by the Goa Inquisition in 1736, after over two centuries of Catholicism in Goa, prohibiting 42 so-called Hindu practices or activities among Catholics. From this list[35] we learn how much synthesis of Catholic and Hindu practice must have existed. As many of the prohibited customs still survive today, we can be sure that the Inquisition was unable to shake the Indian quality of Goan Christianity. Maintenance of the folk culture under a repressive regime and official Church was thus an experience shared both by the Hindus who fled and the Catholics who remained.

For another example of the ambiguity of the so-called 'lines' that 'divide' Catholic and Hindu in Goa, there is the confusion of pronouns used by modern Goans in English, Portuguese, and Hindustani when they discuss the traumatic times of forced conversion and resistance in the 1500s. Many Catholics switch from 'we' to 'they' and back again in telling various episodes and legends from those days. 'We' may mean 'we Goans who resisted the cruel Portuguese', 'we of X village who outsmarted the invaders' or 'we Catholics who opposed the idolators'. When a person cannot decide which pronoun to use about his own ancestors and so, himself, ambiguity has reached its height.

If we look at Goa in the image of Goa *Dourada*, the lines are drawn stringently between believing non-Indians and 'heathen' Indians. It we draw a pattern of Goa *Indica*, we see that all Goans have a common history, one in which resistance and accommodation, but not surrender of the Indian heritage, can be easily traced.

## Kinship

Because intermarriage was strictly forbidden by both Catholics and Hindus—and is still rare in Goa—to talk of common kinship does not involve uncles or cousins, but relations between bloodlines, families, or clans, some of whom were converted and others not. In the changed atmosphere of modern Goa, 'some Goans have taken the trouble to go to the records of parish churches to trace and adopt their [original Indian] family names'.[36] Many Catholics are fully aware that the Brahmin, *Chardo*, *Kunbi* or *Gavda* worshippers or chief patrons (mahajan) at a certain temple are distantly related to them. Many Hindus know that the *confraria* members of a particu-

lar church are their distant relatives too. Some of the Gavda have gone from being Hindus to Catholics and back again, surely leaving kinfolk on both sides of the 'line'.

A spectacular example is found in southern Salcete district, in the villages of Assolna, Velim, Cuncolim and Veroda, where Catholic and Hindu *Chardo* clans openly cooperate as kin, standing against lower caste invasion of their traditional privileges.[37] In this case, common religious belief in the goddess Shanta Durga strengthens the feeling of common kinship and history. Such examples exist in other parts of Goa as well. When people are connected by blood, by history and by sharing in a common economic system, it is natural that they also share a common culture.

## Goa's Common Culture

In a short discussion of a particular culture, it is best to start from the *weltanschaung* or world view, to attempt to describe the kinds of sources of knowledge about the world and then proceed to discussion of how that view or knowledge is transmitted and established as identity, image or 'reality'.

In Goa, as in every society, people gain most of their knowledge and understanding from the flow of daily life. Social and economic relationships create a wealth of particular attitudes, ideals, expectations, and behaviour patterns. The understandings and values of Goan tenant farmers or labourers are similar, no matter what religious group claims their allegiance.

Religion too is a major source or repository of understandings and views of life. Traditionally, most peoples find meaning and motivation in their religion. Religion in any culture provides answers to big questions about the meaning of life and proper behaviour on Earth. It also provides models and emotional instruction through the various rituals, symbols and myths.

While Goan churches and temples continue to provide traditionally distinct content to the people who worship there, in form and style they have tended to move closer together over the past few centuries. There has emerged a syncretic Goan style, which must be considered an important part of a common Goan identity. This development is most pronounced among the lower castes, but large numbers of higher caste Hindus and Catholics also take part in certain key religious festivals, worshipping and honouring the same deities. Such festivals, through their many clusters of rituals, provide strong, emotional lessons on the nature of power and divinity, the sources of help

and relief, and proper methods of propitiating the deities. At festivals such as the *zatras* of *Shanta Durga Kunkallikarin*, *Shanta Durga Verodikarin*, and *Sri Damodar Zambaulim*, the Siolim *Zagor*, the firewalking at Sirigao, and the feast day of Our Lady of Miracles at Mapusa, Goans in their hundreds of thousands can feel their shared kinship and *communitas* (a la Victor Turner). The processions of umbrellas at Cuncolim and Veroda are rituals underlining in obvious symbolic form the history, kinship and common faith in Shanta Durga shared by people of that whole region of Goa.

Catholics, as well as Hindus, go to the Shanta Durga temple at Fatorpa to make offerings or pay allegiance. Many others go to the goddess to ask for a cure or help with their problems. The divinatory oracle at *Shanta Durga Fatorpekarin* temple is consulted more by Catholics than by Hindus, according to the priests there. It is hardly the only such oracle. A syncretic Catholic-Hindu sect, run by a shaman-like healer or exorcist named Miguel Colaço, has its headquarters at Christ Ashram, near Nuvem village.[38] Goans share similar beliefs about ghosts, about spirit possession, going into trance and communicating with spirits.

Thus, the synthesis of Catholic and Hindu beliefs in Goa is neither wishful thinking nor an academic exercise on my part, but widespread and represented by festivals, acts of worship, divination, and healing rituals. Such a body of folk practice and belief is a living wellspring for the creation of a Goa *Indica* image. That such an image does not yet exist is due more, as Kale writes about Konkani *Tiatr* (drama form), "to the scorn with which an influential section of the Goan population regards (this syncretic pattern) as being a vulgar expression of low taste"[39] and dubious authenticity.

From among the symbols of the folk religion, I would like to choose two examples to illustrate my arguments more clearly.

First are the multi-coloured umbrellas carried in procession at Cuncolim and Veroda. They are carried by young men of the Chardo caste to accompany the symbolic return of the goddess Shanta Durga to her original homes in Cuncolim and Veroda from which she was driven by Portuguese zealotry in the 1580s. The young men are devotees of the goddess. Whether they are Catholic or Hindu is irrelevant. The essential point is that they are devotees who publicly demonstrate their faith on at least one day a year. Each umbrella stands for a particular clan among the Chardo mahajan or patrons of the temple—twelve at Cuncolim, six at Veroda. In both villages, two of the clans are composed solely of Catholics, the Hindu having died out, while most of the other clans are mixed. The umbrellas, then, are strong symbols of the common history and kinship of the villages,

continued common devotion to a powerful goddess, and the existence of a common Goan culture that has existed for centuries.

The second example is the mother goddess image itself. Goans revere the Mother Goddess in a number of forms and have done so since long before the Portuguese arrived. *Santeri* or *Shantarupi* Devi is perhaps of Dravidian origin, while other forms are known as *Amba*, *Bhumka*, *Rohan*, *Bhavani*, *Uma*, *Parvati*, *Mahamaya*, *Navadurga*, *Vijayadurga* and *Shanta Durga*. The list is not complete. Shanta Durga is hugely popular in Goa. There were over 100 temples dedicated to Shanta Durga, *Santeri* or Durga when the Portuguese arrived and many still exist today. Of those which were destroyed, it would be interesting to know what percent were replaced by churches to one or another aspect of the Virgin Mary. Certainly the church of Our Lady of Miracles at Mapusa, whose feast day is so popular among Hindus, was previously a Santeri temple. Many others are dedicated to Our Lady or to the Mother of Perpetual Succor.

This is no accident. Goans of both official religions pray to these Goan mother goddesses, especially when illness or disaster strikes. Shanta Durga appears in people's dreams. As a Catholic priest said to me, "The picture of the Mother of Perpetual Succor is always by me here on my desk, in my room and so on. I like her very much. Mightn't I see a vision or dream of her?" He asked this rhetorically, but for non-Brahmin laymen it is a most pertinent question. Whether Shanta Durga, Our Lady, or *Saibin Mae*...they belong to Goa *Indica*.

Myths explain the syncretism of Goan faith and justify it, particularly to Catholics, whose tradition is more exclusivist than the Hindus. One I will put forward here is that seven sister goddesses lived in Goa, each with her own temple. Some people say there were brothers, others differ on the names of the seven. All say, however, that one or two goddesses were converted to Catholicism while the others remained Hindu. Hence, since all are still sisters, it is perfectly justified for people to worship at either temple or church. Given that nobody can name the original temples or converted churches accurately, the number of temples and churches involved is considerably more than seven.

The myth should not be taken as fact. It is an emotional explanation of how Goans are still one people with one culture even if, on the surface, they are divided. Thus, when I say that a majority of Goans share in a syncretic Hindu-Catholic religion—undefined, unlabelled, but mutually understood—it should be apparent that the divide based on two exclusive Great Traditions, Roman Catholicism and what is called classical Hinduism, is apart from the Goan folk

tradition. The image of Goa *Dourada* depends on this divide; the image of Goa *Indica* can be one of two traditions slowly fusing over centuries, of a lively folk tradition that is uniquely Goan. The pattern of fusion found in Goa also exists throughout the subcontinent, though the actual content of what has fused and mingled differs from region to region. What connects India under its surface diversity is the existence of this synthesising pattern.

I have left language to the last. Konkani, above all, is the cement which binds all Goans across lines of religion, caste and class. Konkani is the common, universal language among Goans and has a long history of use in church, popular literature and popular theatre.[40] It is no wonder, then, that the history of Goa's struggle for official recognition has been in large part the story of Konkani and that the proponents of merger long continued to label Konkani 'a mere dialect of Marathi'. No wonder Goans conceived their beloved language as a mother, Konkani *Mai*, like Shanta Durga and Our Lady in her various aspects, a powerful symbol of the image of Goa *Indica*.

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4

# *Of Forked Tongues and the Mother Tongue*

**Frederick Noronha***

Language controversies have played an important role in shaping Goa's reality, particularly in the eighties and the nineties. Two prominent mass-based language protests eclipsed most other public issues during this period. One was the 1985-87 Konkani versus Marathi 'official language' controversy; the other, the discord which raged over regional languages versus English as a medium of instruction in 1990-91.

Historians looking back at the Goa of the eighties and the nineties will perhaps find paradoxical the publicly recorded attitude of the average Goan towards the language issue. A volatile subject by any standards, there is a void of vital significance in that record however. Undeniably, there have been sincere supporters of this or the other language in Goa. But leaving aside those and their motivations, it is inexplicable why the behind-the-scenes scripts of the language controversies in the State are seldom discussed and analysed, even in academic circles which should be willing to take up such crucial contemporary issues.

Given half a dozen years since the 'language controversy' ended, it is perhaps time to look more closely at the underpinnings.

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* *Frederick Noronha is Goa's most prolific Internet journalist.* *This is a look at 'issues behind the issues' of the official language and medium of instruction agitations which rocked Goa in the late eighties and early nineties. It was presented at the* Seminar on Understanding Goan Culture *in late October 1994 under the title* 'Politics of Tongues: Language Controversies in Goa'.

What is perhaps needed is to look beyond supporting one side or the other, and instead take a more dispassionate look at the issues behind the "issues". This paper attempts to draw attention to some facts which hint at the politics behind the language stirs.

When it came to language loyalties in Goa, ironies abounded on all sides. Marathi backers (calling themselves dual-language backers) pointed out that large sections of the 'Konkani camp' used English as the preferred means of communication, both spoken and written. If this charge was not untrue, so was the counter-charge: most Marathi supporters in Goa actually spoke Konkani. But that is not the end of the story. During the 1990-91 medium of instruction protests, those demanding the right to study in government-subsidised English medium primary schools march down the main thoroughfares of Panjim, and on to the Bishop's Palace, carrying placards and shouting slogans in Konkani. Top politicians who have campaigned for regional languages in a vociferous manner have been publicly accused of sending their own children to premier English-medium schools, even to distant places outside Goa.

As Jyotsna Kamal points out (*Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol XXI, No.14, April 5, 1986 p.569): "The language controversy in Goa has a long history and reflects several paradoxes and aberrations. Why, for instance, did the Portuguese encourage Konkani for the initial 150 years, but throttle it later? Why did the Portuguese tolerate the "mustifund" schools started privately by collecting fistfuls of grain from each household? The Portuguese even sponsored Marathi schools in the 19th century. How come the historic verdict of the Opinion Poll not to merge with Maharashtra was followed immediately by the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) ruling over Goa (for nearly a decade and half)?"

As the Madras-based journal *The Hindu* (December 28, 1986) wrote: "Another peculiar feature is that though 90 percent of the people of the territory speak Konkani, more than 60 percent of the Hindus have enrolled their children in Marathi medium schools. Konkani protagonists have no compunctions about sending their children to English-medium schools. There are no takers for Konkani-medium schools."

Despite the controversy and the conflict, the row over what is Goa's official language is one which still smoulders...ministers holding the portfolio have been ambivalent; and this reflects in their uncertainty over whether to designate themselves the Minister for Official Language or Languages. At the end of the day, politicians are still fighting over what exactly is Goa's official language (or, alter-

natively, languages). Scenes over this could be witnessed in the Goa Assembly even months ago.

Recently, some evidence tumbled out to show the important role played by MGP leaders in drafting the Official Language Act of 1987, in the version it was finally passed. But this law—intending to please all, but in reality satisfying none—is more ambiguous than clear about what the position is. The law actually passed on February 4, 1987, was very much different from the pro-Konkani law sought to be pushed through months earlier, as the Goa, Daman and Diu Official Languages Bill, 1986.

The law, as passed, says that the Konkani language (in the Devanagri script) shall be the official language for "any or all" of the official purposes of the Union Territory (as it then was), and that "different dates may be appointed for different official purposes". But this shall take effect only "from such date as the (then Union Territory) Administrator, by notification, a point..." Though Konkani is called the "official language", Marathi "shall also be used for all or any of the official purposes",...similar notifications by the Administrator.

By its non-committal stance, this is a law under which it is virtually impossible to implement either Konkani or Marathi, or both as the official language(s) of Goa. Given the ground reality, it is unlikely that either one of the two contending camps would be keen to press for official language status in a manner in which the "other" language would be given the same. Precisely because language in Goa is seen as a zero-sum game: where one party has to lose for the other to gain.

Former editor of the Marathi daily *Gomantak,* N.G. Athavale, a key figure in defining part of the agenda for the 1985-87 language war said rather cryptically, recently, while speaking from the Shiv Sena platform in mid-October at Mapusa: "Marathi lost the battle but Konkani did not win either. It was the [Congress(I) party] observers from Karnataka who won..."

## Hidden Issues in the Language War

But then, what were some of the less obvious issues in the language agitation, which can be termed the first all-Goa protests, involving people across the State, since the Opinion Poll days of the sixties?

Row Kavi gives a good idea (See, Row Kavi Ashok, *'Settling Old Scores', 'Orphaned Language'* and *'Yearning Of People',* in *The Week,*

Cochin, January 18-24, 1987 p.11) of the caste and communal conflict stoking the bitterness over language, as well as some of the other political and other interests in his journalistic essay.

He sees the language battle as a mildly-camouflaged caste war, with "the Goa Congress supported mainly by the Catholics and Konkani Porjecho Awaz (KPA), claiming to represent all Konkani interests including the Gowda Saraswats as well as Christians...(having) decided to harass the Maratha-dominated Congress(I)".

Row Kavi (ibid, 15) describes the situation thus: "Some local Christians converted by the Portuguese did not like Cunha Rivara's idea (of using the regional languages for education). They choose to educate their children in Portuguese. The Hindus, who had by then retreated to the hinterland, brought in Karada, Deshasth and Konkanasth Brahmins from Maharashtra to teach their children in Marathi...Only two institutions kept the fact in mind that Konkani was indeed a living language. One was the Catholic Church which knew that the Gospel could be spread only through the local language. The other was the Gowda Saraswat Brahmin community which considered it the *divyabhasa* (divine language). They controlled the temples in the hinterland and hired Maratha Brahmins to manage them while they adjusted to the situation by learning enough Portuguese and becoming bureaucrats, all the while talking Konkani at home.

"So quick was their rise that they invited the wrath of both the Church and the Maratha Brahmins. Some of the Maratha Brahmins even took the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins to the Madras High Court, accusing them of unbrahmanical practices—eating fish and no hobnobbing with the *mlecha*. The Maharashtrian Brahmins lost the case. The animosity between the two Brahmin sects grew. The Gowda Saraswats continued to prosper. The Marathas intended to keep the temple rituals in Marathi and the Gowda Saraswats minded their money in Konkani written in the Devanagri script. Saraswats...used the Catholics against the usurpers from Maharashtra...and they would continue to hold the strings of the economy."

One other report noted with bluntness: "It would appear even after 25 years of self-government, there is a latent fear in the Hindu *bahujan samaj* (non-Saraswat Brahmin castes) that they may be dominated by the Christian-Hindu Brahmin combination which had ruled the roost in the last 15 years erstwhile Portuguese colonial rule."

John Ribeiro, writing in the *Sunday Observer* (January 1, 1987) argues that the Konkani used by the litterati is, in essence, differ-

ent from colloquial Konkani because the Konkani litterati came typically from the Saraswat Brahmin caste. He quotes another *Gomantak* ex-editor, B.D. Satoskar as saying: "What is being written today is Saraswat Konkani. The move to standardise it will create a reaction from the Hindu Bahujan Samaj, or the non-Saraswats...(like the revolt against Marathi in Maharashtra). A large number of the Bahujan Samaj are hostile to Konkani and favour the dual language formula because of the hostility to Saraswat Konkani."

Was this really the case? What other explanation can there be for the involvement of Catholics, virtually *en masse*, on the Konkani side of the 1985-87 language agitation?

The more obvious factor was the role of the Catholic Church in taking a pro-Konkani stand. Apart from this, there is the less-noticed reality of the 'alienation' factor, if one could call it that. Konkani was used as a tool by sections of the Catholic middle-class to combat the feeling of alienation brought on amidst a fast-Westernising section of the society. In the post-colonial situation, when the demands of identity-formation have rapidly changed, quite a few among this section seem eager to at least have a language link to 'genuine' Indianness, their claim to which is otherwise questioned. Besides, the campaigning of *Hindutva* communal groupings seem to have also aggravated such sentiments, with the Catholic sometimes finding himself questioned for his religious affiliation, level of Westernisation and even patriotism.

Whether one accepts this view or not, it would be difficult to argue against or refute the contention that some form or the other of casteism, communalism and chauvinism played a key role in the language protests. Of course, there were exceptions to this trend.

Caste-based divides were a little more difficult to perceive, camouflaged as they were under a thick sheath of other elements. But communalism, as always, is a rather blatant phenomenon. *The Sunday Observer*, then a lively well-read journal, focussed on it in a three-word, inch-tall—even if simplistic—headline, "Goans Turn Communal" (*The Sunday Observer*, December 28, 1986). But there was perhaps good reason to substantiate this belief.

One of the Konkani agitation leaders came out with a volume of translations of editorials published in a prominent local journal, in an attempt to show that such campaigning through the media exacerbated the communal divide. (Naik, Datta, *Laying The Grounds For Communal Riots*, published by the author, 1987.) But the editor facing the charge, Narayan Athavale argued that Naik had undertaken an "outright perverted translation...aimed at defaming me as

well as all the Marathi-speaking Goans". Athavale, then incidentally also a member of the Press Council, contended that the translations of his editorials had taken "advantage of a sentence without proper reference and (placing it in) the context not in which it was used, to present a distorted meaning".

Students belonging to the then-active Progressive Students Union still recall frenetic efforts to stall the communal demon which suddenly arose in areas like Benaulim, Mapusa and Vasco. Communalisation of the protests was also visible from the pattern of the deaths following group clashes in Dongrim. (This incident was not directly related to the language agitation; but it could take place due to the consequent breakdown of law and order in the State. Besides, the hatred with which these killings were committed also points to the bitter communal polarisation which preceded this incident.)

One of the few citizens' rights groups then active in Goa also reported incidents from Shiroda, Vasco and Marcela and in "other areas in Goa" stating however that these were "relatively minor" in nature. (See, *Language Agitation In Goa: Police Firing At Gogol, Margao,* CCLDR Report, Citizens for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights, Goa, March 1987.)

Shadowy groups like one calling itself 'Konkniche Suicide Squad' also sprouted, to issue anonymous threats to a number of clubs organising Christmas dances—in Taleigao, Betalbatim, Cansa-Tivim, Parra, Mapusa and Panjim. (Handwritten note titled Warning, signed by the 'Konkniche Suicide Squad', undated.)

Another report by the CCLDR (*Language Stir In Goa*—A Report, unpublished) also notes the questionable response of the State. It found it "a disturbing fact that there appeared to be a tendency to make selective arrests from the minority Christian community".

Pamphlets too were silently doing the rounds at this time, only adding to the already critical communal polarisation. One example of this is the printed pamphlet titled *'KPA-cho Ullo No.1'* (KPA's First Call; undated, publisher not mentioned.) Incidentally, the KPA here stands not for the Konkani Porjecho Avaz, but for the "Kristi Porjecho Avaz", and issues raised included allegations of denial of government-jobs to Christians, the attitude to laugh away the Konkani speech used by the community, and the lack of benefits received despite wholehearted participation in the Opinion Poll 1967. Another anonymous, photocopied two-paged letter, signed by the "Catholic Youth Forces—Miramar, Panjim, Santa Cruz and Merces" wrote to entertainment organisers and demanded that they "transfer" their advertisements from one newspaper to another, on communal considerations.

Chauvinism, particularly of the regional kind, was also perceptible to someone following the course of the protests. For the Konkani side, the main argument around which support for the language was built up was, often, the claim that absence of Konkani as the sole official language would lead to Goa being swamped by "outsiders". The promise also put out was that "locals" would get job preference if Konkani was made the sole official language, a promise which did not materialise.

"Goa had to face continuous onslaughts on its identity for the last twenty-five years," said a KPA memorandum, "and the onslaughts are being continued even today, with a result that a complete change in Goa is (being) brought about and Goans are becoming aliens in their own homeland" (See, KPA English translation of the original Konkani memorandum submitted to the chief minister on December 10, 1986, unpublished mss). The umbrella organisation leading the Konkani side of the language protest, also argued at the height of the agitation that the ethnic population of Goa had diminished because of the government's failure to encourage and promote Konkani. (Munshi, Debashish, 'Pro-Konkani rally turns violent', report in *The Times of India*, December 19, 1986.)

Pillai (*The Sunday Observer*, December 28, 1986) also notes the "obvious" chauvinism in the Marathi camp. He says the Gomantak editor Narayan Athavale took a "holier-than-thou" attitude, and quotes Athavale saying: "Konkani has little literature of its own. In all, there are 300 books published in Konkani, whereas Marathi has a rich literary history...It (Konkani) is spoken by everyone, but the written language is Marathi. That is why I have been telling these people, go develop your language for about 20 years and then agitate."

One other publicly-circulated pamphlet, strongly urging a boycott of festival celebrations and appealing for a "Black Christmas" in the winter of 1986, puts it thus: "If your (elected) leaders...attempt to sell you in slavery, for the greed of paltry copper coins, in the hands of pot-bellied, pan-potti spit cultured, poverty ridden, stink smeared, corruption imbued Maha-brutes (sic), would there still be a place for celebrations?" (*An appeal for (a) Black Christmas*, Anonymous, December 1986, unpublished mss.)

## The Medium of Instruction Issue

Some three years after the "end" of the official language agitation, another language-related controversy began to take over the domain of public discussion. This was relating to the medium of in-

struction at the primary level. Leaving aside finer details involved, what needs to be noted here is that the controversy basically revolved around whether English should be allowed to have a role at the primary level of education or not.

Oddly, this controversy began when someone noticed a petition in the courts, brought forward by primary school teachers of minority-run schools who were seeking an improvement of their poor pay conditions, equal to those of the government school teachers in the State. Teachers in non-government primaries were putting in the same amount of work, and were being paid basic salaries of just between Rs.165 and Rs.400 per month, as against the government teachers' corresponding scale of Rs.1,200. But there was a catch here; private primary schools in Goa were not all being given government grants, for some strange reason. And, in its School Education Act, the Goa government had laid down that nothing in Chapter IV (dealing with the terms and conditions of service of employees of recognised private schools) would apply to "an unaided minority school".

Church-affiliated schools, and those run by the Jesuits and two other religious societies of nuns—which were also affected by the ruling—argued in court and sought refuge under the cultural and educational rights of minorities contained in Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution. Actually, the issue was simply economic: if the government was not giving any grants to primary schools, it could hardly expect that the schools pay staff at governmental scales. But instead of the emphasis being laid on the fact that the schools were "unaided", it was on their "minority" character. This resulted in the Goa High Court Bench ruling that allowing the private primaries to pay lower salaries to their staff (merely because they were minority institutions) would be ultra-vires of Article 14 of the Constitution. (Writ Petition No.302 of 1988, judgement dated November 7/8, 1989.)

Three months after this judgement, the tenth session of the All India Konkani Writers' Conference put forward a demand that the Goa government "should impart pre-primary and primary education in Konkani only...(and) that no grants nor assistance should be given to those private schools which harm the minds of the tender children by thrusting on them...primary and primary education in alien languages, especially English". ('Resolutions Passed', Konkani Basha Mandal, no date.) Later, in another development, backers of both Marathi and Konkani joined forces to demand government grants for private primary schools provided they did not use English as the medium of instruction. The MGP-dominated Progressive Democratic Front government acceded to this demand.

Goa's Catholic Church, the schools of which were most affected

by this issue, took a zig-zagged position. Initially, it showed resistance and a determination to challenge the policy, and seek grants for its many English-medium primary schools (See 'A Tricky Problem', *Renewal*, Pastoral Bulletin of the Archdiocese of Goa, March 15, 1990.) It should be noted that by this time, government grants had become essential, as the teachers had to be paid at government scales, as laid down by the court judgement. Later, the Church changed it stance and readied to implement a policy of switching over its primary schools to the regional language, i.e. Konkani. With this change, the Church was itself pitted against pro-English-medium parents, some of whom took out vociferous protest marches.

Incidentally, politicians—particularly those of the Congress (I), when they were out of power in 1990—took a strong interest in backing protests over this issue. But when the same party got back into power, the issue was, apparently cynically, forgotten. In this case, the laudable aim of teaching children in all regional language was turned into another contentious issue, obviously because of the deep divide which exists among various sections of Goan society. A salary dispute was conveniently used to enforce Konkani and Marathi primary education, despite the fact that nearly forty percent of the primary students were, at that time, studying in the English medium. No efforts were made to see why parents—including some from the most deprived sections of society—were so keen to have their children educated through English. Neither was any effort made at least acknowledge—if not tackle—the divisions within Goan society.

## Who Distorts the Issue?

Why do even genuine issues in Goa have to get twisted and distorted, in a way is hardly helpful to all but a tiny handful? The discerning writer on Goa (and anthropologist) Robert S. Newman gives this understanding of the situation, though in a different context: "First the society is divided by caste and class, with two major religious groups and one minor one (Muslim). Second, there is a long history of oppression, including the Inquisition, and discrimination by Catholics (both Portuguese and Goan) against the others. Third, upper class landlords and government officials during colonial times and landlords, industrialists and businessmen in recent times have exploited the lower or working classes—tenants, miners, dock workers, toddy-tappers, servants, factory hands, waiters and drivers, for example...some of the so-called freedom struggles of the past were really attempts by (the) powerful landed class to exploit their erstwhile 'subjects' without Portuguese interference."

Not incidentally, it was sections from these very groups who have played a determining role in language-related controversies, and some others too, in Goa. Therefore, that they went the way they did is not much of a surprise. "Whatever the outcome of the language controversy," Jyotsna Kamal wrote perceptively in 1986, and one could say with the benefit of hindsight, "the voice of the people no doubt will remain hushed". (*Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol XXI, No.14, April 5, 1986 p.569)

5

# *Varying Voices of Goan Nationalism*

**Nishtha Tombat***

In an attempt to understand nationalism in Goa, I had interviewed numerous participants in the struggle for Goa's freedom. However, instead of coming to an understanding of 'nationalism' in Goa, what became increasingly clear to me was that the experience of nationalism was not uniform for everyone.

Aside from the usual differences in ideology, there were differences that were more fundamental in nature. Language and religion were especially contentious issues. A section of Hindu nationalists held a definite bias against Christians. Although they acknowledged that there were Christians who had participated in Goa's freedom struggle with as much patriotism as any Hindu nationalist, they felt that the majority of the Christians had been 'denationalised'.

Instead of glossing over this religious divide, I think the issue of the relationship between religion and nationalism needs to be examined. To my knowledge, in Goa, this has not been done with much rigour. A few presentations have been made in which the 'patriotic' Hindu has been counterposed with the 'denationalised' Christian without any substantial evidence to prove the patriotism of the Hindus or the denationalisation of the Christians. This amounts to little more than the promotion of communalism under the veil of academia.

In this paper I will be raising more questions than I answer. To date, there is a tendency to portray Goa as an isle of communal

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harmony. However, differences in consciousness among the people largely related to religion do exist. I believe that instead of hiding these differences, a greater bond of unity can be built when a healthy respect for these differences is built up.

In this context, I wish to examine two modes of nationalist thought as represented in the writings of Francisco Luis Gomes (1829-1869) and Tristao de Braganza Cunha (1891-1958). The accepted practice has been to examine the thinking of the latter as a development on the thinking of the former. Instead, I wish to examine their modes of thought as divergent trends which persist in varying ways in the present. For this purpose I have selected two texts, *Os Brahmanes* (from here on referred to as *The Brahmins*), a novel authored by Gomes in 1866, and *The Denationalisation of Goans*, an essay written by Cunha in 1944.

*The Brahmins* is based in Oudh. The central characters are Mr Robert Davis, an Irishman come to Oudh to oversee his ailing uncle's estate which is to be bequeathed to him; his daughter Helen, studying in London; his cousin, Richard; Magnod, a devout Hindu brahmin, devoted in his service to the ailing Davis; his children (later christened Thomas and Emily); and a Portuguese missionary, Frei Francisco.

The story in brief: Robert Davis, the arrogant newcomer, unfamiliar with Indian customs orders Magnod to come before him whilst he is eating. Magnod, not wishing to pollute himself, refuses. Affronted by his refusal, the enraged Davis orders his servants to physically bring Magnod before him and to aggravate Magnod's already polluted state throws a plate of beef at him. Magnod leaves his family, not being able to face the loss of caste that awaited their lot and later joins a *Thugee* gang. Robert Davis wanting to apologise to Magnod too late, finds that he is gone and that his wife has committed suicide, leaving behind two orphans. The remorseful Davis, along with Frei Francisco takes the children into his custody. They are christened and sent to study in London with his daughter. Unaware of Davis' good deeds towards his children, Magnod steals the will of the elder Davis in which Robert is named heir, leaving him in dire economic straits. Various complications arise, aside from which Thomas and Helen fall in love. Robert is unwilling to accept a 'brahmin' as a suitor for his daughter, 'a descendant of the O'Brians'. However, after a host of happenings, the union between the Britisher and Brahmin is consecrated, thanks to Frei Francisco and Magnod's redemption is achieved as he is baptised with the name of Robert Davis.

The *Denationalisation of Goans* begins with the statement:

"In the whole of India no people is so denationalised as Goans. A complete lack of national consciousness and the most shameful subjection to foreign rulers, either Portuguese or British render the Goan, and particularly the Goan Christian, a stranger in his own land."

According to Cunha, the denationalisation of Goans was the process through which the people, especially the elite sections, had lost touch with their own culture and instead identified their interests with that of the Portuguese colonisers. The Portuguese had enslaved the minds of Goans and brought about their denationalisation through various agencies, but the main agencies were the Portuguese State working in conjunction with the Church. "The peculiarly tyrannical and intolerant ways of the Portuguese rulers" had led to the "disfigurement" of the national character of the Goan people.

Although there is a tendency to use the term 'denationalised Goan' with reference to Christians, Cunha nowhere suggests that Hindus were exempted from this process and states, quite clearly, that:

"The terroristic method of conversion...is responsible for the physical and moral cowardice, the habits of dilation and adulation, and debasement in the character produced in the Goan people, both Christian and Hindu". (1961:96)

Although *The Brahmins* is a novel and *The Denationalisation of Goans* is an essay that was brought out as a booklet, both were written for the purposes of propaganda and contain the views of the respective authors on issues they believed in.

*The Brahmins* is liberally interspersed with the comments of the author, though sometimes it appears that he prefers to put forward his views through the Portuguese missionary, Frei Francisco. Unlike Cunha, he does not unequivocally condemn colonialism:

"Frei Francisco did not approve of the English rule in India, but he preferred it to the despotism of the Nawabs and Rajahs. He applauded the material improvements that were being introduced in the Bengal Presidency. For they were also an agent of civilisation." (1931:45)

Gomes, in a similar vein to Jyotiba Phule in Maharashtra, was acutely aware of the social evils of his time and saw European civilisation as a possible panacea for these evils. He comments:

"Cholera and the Thug were born in the same country and in the same year. India is their native land...Cholera is the exhalation

from the putrid corpses that floated down the waters of the Ganges; the Thug is the pestilential emanation of liberty and independence corrupted...

"Instead of snatching the noose from the hands of the Thugs, let the English Government set about to disarm their reason by dissipating the errors that obscure it." (1931:20)

All impartial men desired "India for India" according to Gomes, at the same time: "To men of liberal principles and to mankind it is perfectly indifferent whether India is called English or Brahmanical; what they cannot consent to is that the domination be exploitation instead of paternal tutelage." Because India had been ridden with rivalries of different dynasties, caste hatred and religious antagonisms, it had been possible for England to conquer her. "With only one religion, only one dynasty, only one caste, India would have been invincible." (1931:147)

For Phule, the advent of the British signified a freedom for the people from the tyrannies of the cruel Brahmanical rule of the Peshwas. It gave the people a chance to organise themselves and struggle for their betterment. For Gomes, colonial rule seemed to offer the people an opportunity for civilisation. However, the novel, in a sense, appears to be a warning to the British not to replace the ousted brahmins but to learn wisdom as epitomised in Frei Francisco.

Gomes states: "The most powerful instruments of civilisation are two: the Christian religion, and education." (1931:147) He goes on to discuss how conversions could be achieved in British India. He gives importance to the use of tact and suggests that Britain learn from Portugal:

"Portugal converted a portion of India to the Catholic religion with the arms of her soldiers, with the blood of her martyrs, with the miracles of her saints, and with the fires of her Inquisition. Those who were vanquished in this struggle became Christians and Portuguese. England might imitate the example, except as regards force...".(1931:148)

In *The Brahmins*, Gomes describes Frei Francisco as a "liberal mind" for whom there were "neither classes nor stations in life"—"Christianity was his politics".(1931:45) It appears that for Francisco Luis Gomes, too, Christianity was his politics. His love for his country, "that land that formulated democracy in the game of chess", which gave birth to the *Mahabharata*, "the true Himalaya of literature", is unquestionable. However, just as later nationalists sought to strengthen India, the nation, with the help of Hinduism, Gomes

envisioned the building of an invincible nation with the help of Christianity and the liberal values of 'enlightened' Europe.

In the case of Cunha, the approach to colonial rule, conversions to Christianity and colonial education were quite the opposite. He attempts to show that till the Portuguese came, Goa had been a part of the great Indian civilisation, whereas now it survived in a state of inculture.

While many had been terrorised into Christianity, others lived in fear of being converted. This, along with the acquirement of an alien way of life had resulted in the people of Goa having lost the pride of their race. The education was alien and only served to make its recipients aspire to official posts. The only way in which Goans could once more be integrated with the Indian nation was by regaining their pride of race.

The difference in approach could partly be explained by the different time frames in which they lived. However, I feel that the differences are more fundamental in nature, similar to the type of essential differences that existed between Jyotiba Phule and M G Ranade who were contemporaries, or between Bhagat Singh and V D Savarkar—according to popular lore, the former is supposed to have been introduced to the revolutionary struggle through the writings of the latter.

I see no sense in trying to ascertain who was the 'true' nationalist. Gomes, acutely aware of the enemy within, sought help from the 'pater' who would leave once his period of tutelage was over. Cunha, acutely aware of the enemy without, sought to galvanise a divided people into a nation. Each of them had his share of naivety and idealism and both were great nationalists, whose voices continue to echo in varying resonances today.

6

# *The Church in Goa: Giving to Cesar What is Cesar's?*

**Teotonio R. De Souza***

Nicodemus, a leading Jew, Pharisee and a politician who played it safe, once approached Jesus in the dark night to seek his divine advice. He left puzzled with the dilemma of remaining an adult and being born again and from above (Gospel of St. John 3:1-5). Elsewhere in the Gospels we come across the warning: "Anyone who does not welcome the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Mt.19:14; Lk.18:16; Mk.1:14) The Gospels are replete with metaphors of sheep and lambs. They all identify the faithful ones, the heirs to heaven.

Interpretations and misinterpretations of scriptural texts have contributed greatly to promote a Christian ethos in which passive submission to authority is identified with virtue and dissent with irreverence. Of course, the dominant groups of Christianity from metropolitan colonial churches read the lines differently for their own people, who were the chosen ones and divinely inspired to teach the natives tainted with pagan traditions. St Francis Xavier did not very much approve of this ambiguity of reading, and much less the attitudes and behaviour based on it on the part of the colonialists. If he

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called for the Inquisition to be set up in Goa, it was motivated by his annoyance at the bad example that the colonialists were setting to the new native converts.

In the course of centuries of domination the successive generations of Goans absorbed the submissiveness as part of their characteristic ethos (the so-called *sossegado* attitude). It is what defeat, conquest and humiliation did to them over time, while learning to cope with these experiences and survive. It may take as many centuries to heal these psychic wounds and to build a healthier identity, freer from over-reactions to the past, including an apparent passivity covering fears and lack of self-esteem. The freedom of the children of God, which is preached in the Bible, made little sense to the Goans for long, except to leave their native soil to migrate in search of daily bread. Still, both at home and wherever they migrated, they did not fail to compensate their humiliated self and frustrated aggressiveness by discriminating against each other in the form of caste and religious differences. Even the feeling of cultural openness that helped the migrants to adjust to new climes and West-dominated colonial ambience was a part of the same identity, which led most Goan Christians at home to seek greater affinity with the colonial brethren in religion. It is a complex of attitudes and feelings that needs a more thorough study.

(Incidentally, the Goan Hindus have their own variances of wounded identity, and it is not to be resolved too simplistically with reference to hurt religious feelings during the colonial past. A hardcore Pune brahmin, who headed a government department in Goa for nearly a decade and half, tried to settle down in Goa. He had bought a house close to Mangueshi temple and wishes to spend his retirement as a *Jyotishi*, but he left Goa after a couple of years and disappointed. He gave me an explanation that left me startled: "These Goan Hindus are different!")

Most Goan Christians who were faithful to the Goan Church magisterium collaborated with the Portuguese civilising mission that made of them a cultural tragicomedy. This mission was freshly emphasized by Dr Oliveira Salazar through the *Acto Colonial* of his *Estado Novo*, and the predecessor of the last Patriarch of Goa made a fine art of it in his 60 or so official letters addressed to the priests of the Archdiocese. These documents are a masterpiece of a magisterial teaching wedded to State politics. The leaders of the faithful were to teach that salvation lay with the Portuguese and in dissociating themselves from the cultural-political relationship with the rest of India. In the wake of the *satyagraha* movement in Goa, every time India put some additional pressure on Goa, pilgrimages were ar-

ranged to the tomb of St Francis Xavier to pray to the saint to deliver them from deliverance. It was rather broad-minded of the Portuguese to trust so much in the saint who in his life-time reacted very strongly against their colonial abuses, and against their zeal to conjugate wrong verbs and with wrong people!

In spite of Portugal's long history of anti-clericalism and unhappy relations with the Vatican, the *Estado Novo* of Salazar tried to uphold the ghost of *Padroado*. The great statesman, described by some as a good Catholic but a bad man, saw no ambiguity of his actions till the very end. His orders to adopt a scorched earth policy before abandoning the 'Rome of the East' in 1961 marked the tail-end of a sad story that began centuries earlier. The Portuguese were saved from ending their civilising mission in a barbaric manner by the intervention of a high-ranking Goan Christian, Dr Abel Colaço, who had understood Christianity better than the masters. His advice to the Patriarch and their joint intervention before a hesitant Governor General helped to avoid what the same Governor General later termed *um sacrificio inútil* (a wasted sacrifice), and was condemned by the home regime as a national traitor and forced into exile.

We cannot ignore a section of Goan Christians in Mumbai who made their contribution Goa's freedom struggle and also retained all their love for the traditional Goan Christianity. One of their leaders battled more recently to restore the Patriarchate to Goan Archdiocese. Incidentally, and unfortunately, his recent death merited little attention, despite his significant contribution to his homeland. Because of the package deal available to Goan Christians, and no assorted variety, the stray sheep were forced at various times to change their domicile to the neighbouring Indian territory and even face the charge of being bad Catholics, if not 'communist'. Of course, that was also the only alternative for most Goans who could not be accommodated in the non-existent Portuguese industry and stagnating agriculture. The Goan Catholics maintained a steady campaign in favour of Goa's liberation from Bombay and elsewhere had no hang-ups like the Goan Catholics inside Goa. They had the example of Cardinal Gracias of Bombay, and many other prominent Goan clergymen, who had come out openly in their condemnation of the Portuguese colonial rule in Goa and demanded that it should end. One of these priests was even considered in these circles as candidate for leading the Church of Goa when liberated from *Padroado* control. Another priest belonging to a native religious congregation was actively involved in sustaining the Church in the liberated enclaves of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. However, most of this participation in liberation struggle was non-violent, even though the Goan Catholic community

was most affected by the economic blockade imposed by the Indian authorities and the tax imposed by the Portuguese upon the remittances of money to relatives in Goa.

My one conclusion is that this section of Goan Catholics in India (outside Goa) were behaving as naughty children in the eyes of the Portuguese patronized Church. But, with a few outstanding exceptions, they were behaving as children all the same. They retained all the traditional timidity and unwillingness to risk by confronting the State authorities, and kept up the old game of 'wait-and-see' till it was safe to take sides and have a share in the gains. One stalwart of the Bombay-based Goan Christians had even coined a motto with his penchant for rhetoric: "Rome-rule is home-rule". He was knighted with a papal award. But as already stated, this section of Goans need not be considered as a monolith. Some outstanding figures, like Prof Armando Menezes, and the Goan Jesuit in Bombay, Albert Mendonça, faced the wrath of the colonialists within their local church and religious order. The history of their experiences and of such others is yet to be written.

To complete my picture of Goan Catholicism and its stand vis-a-vis Goa's freedom struggle, it would be too facile a generalization to lay at the feet of Catholics alone the responsibility for the obvious absence of a mass liberation movement in Goa. To quote Juliao Menezes in his *Goa's Freedom Struggle* (1947): "There is clear evidence to show that the Hindu Sabhites among the Goan Hindus have joined hands with Catholic Action agents" and "a large number of Saraswat Brahmins are collaborating with Catholic Actionists and the Portuguese Government...Some of these men are even misusing the name and authority of the National Congress (Goa)." In such a murky situation of the pre-Liberation days it is difficult to assign to any single group the glory of untarnished championship of Goa's freedom struggle. V N Lawande (the *Loundo* who had struck terror in the ranks of the Portuguese rulers and their native collaborators) admitted, during a seminar on Oral History of Goa's Freedom Struggle organised by me at the Xavier Centre of Historical Research some years ago, that he had experienced much goodwill among many village Catholics in the course of his terrorist campaign. Once he was nearly captured by the vigilant police inside a village where he had gone to purchase a carbine, but they failed to detect their most-wanted man who crossed their roadblock in a car donning a priest's soutane and saying beads. This life-saving ruse was made possible by a sympathetic Catholic family. Mr Lawande also admitted that the Catholics who were sympathetic to the cause would have been more emotionally involved if they could keep in touch with the devel-

opments through papers and leaflets that were secretly circulated in the Marathi script which was more easily accessible to the Marathi-reading Hindu population.

The liberation of Goa would be impossible without direct intervention of the Indian armed forces. However, if Operation Vijay was effected at the close of 1961, its urgency was dictated more by the prospects of the ruling party in the national elections that were scheduled for February 1962, and even more by India's diplomatic stakes in the Non-Aligned Movement. At the Belgrade Conference in September 1961, India's leadership seemed questioned by the African bloc struggling against Portuguese colonialism. Though India had been the initiator of the anti-colonial revolution, she appeared to have lost militancy. The African bloc claimed that a strong action by Nehru in Goa would enhance and even make easier the African revolution, a claim that was confirmed by General Spinola in his *Portugal e o Futuro* (1974). There was also China working hard to undercut Nehru's leadership of the Afro-Asian States. It was to counter these trends and to refurbish his image that Nehru was compelled to sponsor a seminar on Portuguese colonialism in Delhi beginning October 20, 1961. Operation Vijay became an unavoidable next step.

What was happening in the meantime on the Church front? While the press at the local, national and international levels was agog with news of an imminent intervention by India to end the Portuguese rule which it defined in the world fora as "permanent aggression on Indian nationalism", the official Church Bulletin of the Goa Archdiocese carried, in its December 1961 issue, a boldface announcement that Rome had appointed Dom Jose Pedro da Silva as the new Auxiliary Bishop for Goa and with the right for succession as Patriarch. This Azores-born country-cousin of the Patriarch Alvernaz was at this time based in Lisbon and in charge of the politically suspect Catholic Action Movement, an institution which has not yet merited the attention of the historians of Portuguese colonialism at this period of time. It looks as if no qualified and experienced Goan candidate was available for the post, and the approval of such a nomination by the Vatican at such a juncture of Goa's history seemed out of tune with the concerns that Vatican had just voiced so very forcefully through John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra*. Was it just a coincidence that soon after Portugal lost its control over Goa, the former Patriarch of Goa (1942-53), whose "official letters" and patriotic zeal have already been mentioned by us, should be made a Cardinal and given a job at the Vatican? Was it another instance of "be cunning as a serpent" diplomacy of the Vatican? Was not the title of the Patriarch given to the Archdiocese of Goa a sop to stop the whin-

ing of the *Padroado* boys at a time when the Vatican decided to create an independent Indian Church hierarchy in 1886? And had not Rome sent a Golden Rose to Goa Archdiocese to soothe the Portuguese indignation in the wake of the Vatican decision to create the first Cardinal for independent India? If the liberation of Goa did not cause any violent upheaval in the administration of the Church of Goa, the Vatican diplomacy deserves the least credit for it. Even to see some good reason to retain the patriarchate in Goa (or rather to confer it upon a native), it took the Vatican more time than the new Portuguese socialist rulers to renounce the relics of their *Padroado* rights.

Following Goa's liberation, the Portuguese Patriarch maintained, very wisely, a low profile. Fortunately for him and for the Church of Goa, the inauguration of the Vatican Council II in Rome provided the best excuse to move out of an uneasy situation before the end of 1962. Msgr Francisco Xavier da Piedade Rebello then emerged as the head of the Church of Goa and its natural leader. He was consecrated Bishop and Administrator Apostolic of Goa in 1963. He had silently served more than one Patriarch as Secretary, as Chancellor, and as Vicar General. Only the political liberation made a recognition of his services possible. In the earlier dispensation, a couple of Goans were considered fit to rule, at the best, over some African diocese! Unfortunately, some high ranking dissident voices in the Church and politics of Portugal were effectively silenced by the dictatorial regime in Portugal itself. Hence, there was little hope of change in the colonies. The Portuguese citizens themselves had become victims of their own devices, and only an experience of their own enabled them, in time, to sympathise with the plight of the colonised peoples. But somewhat late to redeem the past.

## The New Dispensation and the Church

The political developments of the post-Liberation period have been complex and do not lend themselves to simple explanations. A large section of the population and its ideological leadership were joyous at integration with India. The Portuguese-educated landed gentry preferred to nurse their disappointment within their closed gossip circles or occasionally voiced it in the columns of *O Heraldo* which they patronised less with subscription and more by reading borrowed issues. The dreams of some of a Goan republic became irrelevant overnight. The democratic process in Goa began where it should have, namely, at the village level. Panchayati Raj was brought into existence within less than a year after liberation. The elections held

in October 1962 changed the entire character of the political process in Goa. No elections of the Portuguese-type had any parallel with the universal suffrage that brought the propertyless and uneducated masses into consideration for the first time, giving them a sense of self-dignity. The elections for the first State Assembly the following year further strengthened the political process. The classes that had been most neglected by the Portuguese rule and, consequently, by the more advanced classes of the Goan population, suddenly shot to power. Hindu Brahmins and Christian *bhatkars* entered a period of expiation for past sins.

The Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and its *Bahujan Samaj* ideology was an expression of populism that sought to whip up communal feelings. The Marathi language was used for this along with the merger issue. The penetration of the rural electorate was also done most effectively with promises of land reforms that would give land to the tiller. As most tenants were non-Christian and non-Brahmin, the MGP forced a response from these sections in self-defence. While the Hindu elite vote got divided between the Congress and United Goans Party (UGP), most Christians rallied around UGP despite the fact that mass conversions effected four and half centuries ago had not made them equal through baptism, either socially or economically.

The victory of the MGP with an absolute majority in the first elections and its continued rule over Goa for more than a decade may be considered as the best thing that could happen to the majority of the Goans who had for too long been denied their rightful place. The personality and innate populist style of operating of the late D B Bandodkar gave the downtrodden, for the first time in their lives a sense of self-importance, which the traditional elite classes interpreted as vulgar insolence. Even if social justice under the new dispensation only meant a shifting of injustice from one section of the population to another, the new rule marked a sharp break from the past quasi-feudal ethos that prevailed in Goa. Any other party in power at this critical juncture of Goa's history might have only replaced the old foreign colonial rule with a milder (?) native version of it.

How did the Church fare in the new dispensation? The church of Goa has been accused of encouraging a vote to keep Goa out of Maharashtra in the first Assembly elections and in the Opinion Poll of 1967 which marked the end of a major phase in Goa's political scenario. (Incidentally, I can vouch personally for the large number of under-aged seminarians of Rachol Seminary who voted in the Opinion Poll against merger of Goa.) After 1967, religion and caste con-

tinued to provide pre-given organisational and mobilisational platforms as elsewhere in the country, but political alliances followed more the class interests, cutting across traditional religious and caste groupings. This new phase coincided with the major changes within the Catholic Church at the national and international levels. There had been major self-questioning within the Church following Vatican II, and the responsibility of the laity was being stressed. To implement Vatican II, there was a seminar on "The Church in Goa Today" in 1968, in preparation for the national seminar on "The Church in India Today" in 1970. The seminar in Goa prepared the ground for an organised renewal of the Archdiocese. The immediate results were the establishment of a Priest's Senate, some Diocesan Centres for special apostolates, and a Pastoral Bulletin. It took ten years to set up a Diocesan Pastoral Council, and to establish parish level councils that are not yet a reality everywhere. This process faced protests, and the traditional attitudes of the hierarchy were not always prepared to face them. But this is not new to the Church of Goa. Under the Portuguese rule a native Bishop and priests had instigated rebellions. In the post-Liberation context it was an experience of the democratic revolution inside an ecclesiastical set-up that was not sufficiently cleaned from the inherited attitudes and *modus operandi.* The challenges from within came from different quarters: from lay people as well as from diocesan priests, religious priests and even from nuns! Ironically, from ladies first, when a nun refused to move out from a Church-owned institute for social service, and where the Church wanted to set up its own offices.

There were some priests who had their personal agendas that did not receive official approval and went seeking support from other quarters, including the government. Among the cases that invited greater publicity were the Christ-Ashram of Nuvem, the Independent Church of Cuncolim, the Women's Hostel at Panjim, and the Verna Ashram of the dissident group of Pilar Fathers. Incidentally, the "orthodox" section of this latter group is led now by Tiburcio Ferrao, who waited for his turn to be included in the Council of Advisors of the Patriarch to hit at the Jesuits and even block the renewal of their contract to work in the Archdiocese. All this to settle scores with the writer of this essay, who some years ago contributed to an issue of *Goa Today* devoted to the theme "Struggle for Sainthood". I had said there that Fr Agnelo deserved to be canonised too, just as much as Fr Joseph Vaz, because he would serve as a powerful model to diocesan clergy in modern times of growing secularism. Fr Agnelo had died as Spiritual Father of the diocesan priests of Goa at the time when the Republican ideas of anti-clericalism were not a great encouragement for priesthood. However, my great sin that Fr

Tiburcio and his mentors did not forgive consisted in my referring to the division and scandal within their congregation as the most serious obstacle for the process which they were trying to promote! Though he had picked up 'suitable' excerpts from my many writings, the real *casus belli*, the above mentioned article seems to have escaped his attention! Fr Tiburcio demanded from the Archbishop the appointment of an inquiry committee to investigate the orthodoxy of my writings and the value of the research activities of the Xavier Centre of Historical Research for the Church of Goa. It was only after I received a clean chit of the eight-man committee (curiously the accuser never attended any meeting with me) that I decided to move out of Goa, though for reasons that had nothing to do with such petty concerns and mentality of such leading Goan churchmen.

Returning to the survey of the last four decades of Church leadership in Goa, one can say that each decade was marked by a challenge, and the Church leadership fared noticeably well, despite the kind of disabilities that have been referred to. The challenge of the '60s was survival, and it was over with the Opinion Poll and the role the Church played in influencing the vote. The challenge of the '70s went down into history with the support lent by the Church to the *ramponkar* or traditional fishermen whose interests were in jeopardy as a result of large scale trawling and mechanised fishing. A circular from the Archbishop on January 30, 1978 irked the then chief minister, Mrs Shashikala Kakodkar, who extended the war by supporting a rebel nun and laying State claims to the premises in question and for several other Church properties. The government also tried to humiliate the Archbishop by threatening to withdraw his priority pass for ferry-crossing. Such pettiness probably contributed to decreasing the popularity of the chief minister before the Christian public and to the downfall of her government in 1979 and her political limbo ever since. It is important to recall that the elections coincided with the elections to the Lok Sabha and the Christian community was already strongly agitated over the issue of Freedom of Religion Bill, 1978 brought forward by a Janata MP. The hostility of the chief minister and the reactions to Tyagi Bill got mixed up, with bad consequences for the chief minister.

The decade of the '80s saw the agitation for official language. The understanding of the issue left no doubt that the language issue was used and continues to be used by the politicians in a communal fashion because of the economic implications. Marathi as official language could give the majority community a privileged position regarding employment opportunities, economic power and, consequently, political domination. Hence it was a socio-economic issue

on which depended the right of future generations for equal share of bread and butter. The Church Bulletin of February 1, 1987 expressed the stand of the Church in solidarity with the people. When the Official Language Bill was passed, the Pastoral Bulletin welcomed the compromise as a better part of realism, though it did not hide its disappointment manifested in the use of a rather strong expression "bigamy" to describe the place accorded to Marathi in the Bill (*Renovaçao*, March 1, 1987, p.85). Another issue that drew the Church's serious concern during the past decades, and more particularly in the '80s, was the corruption of the youth through commercialisation of Carnaval as Christian tradition. Since 1963 the government had developed Carnaval as a tourist attraction, and it was noticed that drug abuse was crawling into it. The Carnaval float in Delhi in 1983 marked the beginning of an organised opposition of the church in Goa, objecting to "the values projected during the celebration as they jeopardised the ethical values". The Pastoral Bulletin of February 1, 1984 warned sternly against the "coming *tamasha* of Carnaval". It warned the Catholics not to allow their children to become easy prey and pleasure toys for the benefit of the tourism industry. The Church went a step further and protested against the use of the Panjim Church square for the celebration of Carnaval. The Church stand had its impact, and Carnaval has been a muted affair ever since. Early in 1990 the Archdiocese also hosted a Consultation on Tourism, sponsored by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India. But day to day opposition is no longer from the Church, but from socially concerned individuals and watch groups, such as Goa Foundation and *Jagrut Goenkaranchem Fauz*, that have been keeping an effective check on the abuses of drugs and environment by powerful interest groups.

If we have to draw a balance sheet of the pastoral effectiveness of the Church of Goa, it has definitely been on the positive side. This, in my view, was also greatly due to a more educated and self-confident laity of Goa, than to the clergy. Fortunately, the clergy has also grown with the experience of its shortcomings at all levels, and is now much better equipped to continue building the kingdom of God on Earth without leaving all concerns to life beyond. It benefited immensely from the challenges thrown by the political liberation, as well as by Vatican II. The two almost coincided, and to that extent it has a greater merit for its achievements, and for its ability to "be born again" with the freedom of the children of God and of the mother country. The Gospel challenge thrown to Nicodemus was thus realised in the context of the Goan Church.

7

# *Traditional Colonial to Bourgeois Capitalist*

**Robert S Newman**

This essay has three aims. The first is to examine Goa's transformation from a colony with traditional underpinnings to a bourgeois-capitalist society. The second is to add to the growing literature on Indian regional studies. The third is to draw serious attention to a place that is currently better known as a tourist destination than as a socio-political entity in modern India. The analysis involves a number of fields—economics, history, anthropology, and politics. After a brief overview of Goan society before its takeover by India in 1961, we shall look at recent developments, focussing our attention on five interrelated areas of concern—the 'big families', fishing, the 'gaonkari', cultural expression, and tourism.

## The Pre-Liberation Scenario

Goa, because it was ruled by Portugal for 451 years, has been thought of as a Portuguese outpost, an "island of Western civilization" in an Indian sea. Nevertheless, despite obvious Western influence in certain areas of life (music, dress, architecture, food), and despite its large Catholic community, it is more useful and accurate to regard Goa as an Indian region with a rather unusual past.

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*This important analysis of socio-economic developments in a tiny Portuguese colony-turned-democratic part of the Indian republic was published six years before Mr Newman's essay on the Goan identity reproduced earlier in this volume. The essay first appeared in Pacific Affairs (Aug. 1984) under the title: 'Goa—The Transformation of an Indian Region'.*

Over the course of two centuries (roughly 1700 to 1910), Goan society stagnated, its trade in decline and its politics unchanged. Though there were sporadic revolts and conspiracies by both Hindus and Catholics, Portuguese rule continued basically undisturbed. Even the major reforms undertaken by the Marquis de Pombal, the famous Portuguese prime minister who virtually ruled Portugal between 1749 and 1777, had little effect on the basic structures of Goan society. A number of Goan intellectuals, inspired by Portuguese-European models, studied and wrote in Portugal and France. Repelled by the prevailing political system of Goa, or suffocating in its narrow colonial society, many such educated men migrated to the more open and favorable political climate of British India.

The founding of the Portuguese Republic in 1910 liberated the Hindus of Goa from centuries of discrimination and repression. Immediately, they flooded into the schools, joined associations, established journals, started libraries, and began to take an active role in public life—as teachers, members of government councils, and administrative officials.[1]

During the Salazar regime (established in 1926), and particularly after World War II, Portugal tried to hold on to the fragments of her Indian empire by belatedly encouraging some development projects and by turning Goa into a duty-free enclave. It had long been known that Goa was extremely rich in iron ore deposits, and in 1947 the Portuguese began granting leases for developing them. The leases were taken up mainly by local Hindu merchants, who paid as little as Rs.300 for the privilege of becoming mine owners.[2] With the infusion of foreign capital from India and elsewhere (specifically, Japan and West Germany), the Goan mines developed rapidly in the last decade of colonial rule.

There were also attempts to expand the road network, electricity supplies, and school system all of which had been neglected up to then. "Only in the last two years (before the Liberation)...were textbooks for Marathi...primary schools prepared under government supervision and published in Goa."[3] The number of scholarships for study in Portugal was increased and many Hindus were given the opportunity to attend the metropolitan universities—an opportunity rarely available until this period.

After 1947, Portuguese salaries were very high compared to those paid in India; and retirement pensions were equal to the salaries.[4] Cheap luxury goods and the availability of imported staples made Portuguese rule palatable to many; even today, older Goans yearn for the days of cheap whisky, cheese, olives, and Japanese tex-

tiles. In general, the prices of many consumer goods were about 50 to 70 percent below Indian levels, while incomes were nearly doubled[5]—a situation which encouraged large-scale smuggling of goods into India.

The Portuguese succeeded in creating an artificial prosperity based on iron ore exports, high salaries, and low prices for duty-free goods. Aimed at the politically-aware middle class and the intellectuals, however, the system offered little if anything to the vast majority of people—those engaged in agriculture and fishing. In fact, farmers and fishermen were reduced to subsistence levels, since their products could not compete with the cheap imported foods. There is good evidence that Portuguese efforts to mollify anti-colonial feelings were superficial at best. The only bank in Goa until 1961 was Banco Nacional Ultramarino, which paid no interest on deposits. There were no separate departments or sections of government for various aspects of economic affairs (industry, agriculture, fisheries, forests, mining, land survey, statistics, price control, etc.); rather, all activities were lumped together under a Directorate of Economic Services.[6]

Portugal, a poor country itself, had neither the capital to invest in Goa nor the industrial output to supply Goa's needs—not even the ships to bring goods and take away the iron ore. The Goan economy was doubly colonial: subject to a do-nothing Portuguese administration, it was also exploited by Japanese, European and American interests who bought the iron ore and invested in some domestic facilities. Japan and West Germany together took 70 percent of Goa's iron ore production in 1960.[7]

## Economic and Demographic Developments

Since the Indian Army takeover of Goa, in December 1961, the territory has undergone very rapid change in many different areas. As an integral part of India, Goa's economy has been basically transformed. As soon as the Indian Army moved in, Goa's status as a duty-free port ended. Cheap liquor and cheap imported textiles, foods, and luxury goods disappeared. Living standards no doubt declined for the short term. But in place of the unproductive, essentially artificial system created by the Salazar government, Indians rapidly built up the same development-oriented system they had created in other parts of their country.

Agricultural production was emphasised: Goa was integrated into the Community Development Block system; improved seeds, fertilisers, and up-to-date methods were adopted. By 1970, the production of rice (the basic crop) had increased by 45 percent.[8] New

land was brought under cultivation and existing irrigation canals improved. (The major Selaulim irrigation project is now nearer completion, and will irrigate some 36,000 acres when finished).[9] Production of coconuts, cashew nuts and their by-products was expanded and the fish catch was greatly increased. Iron ore mining, exporting, and associated industries have all flourished. Iron ore production rose from 6.4 million tonnes in 1961 (the last year of Portuguese rule)[10] to a high of 14.8 million tonnes in 1976.[11] Thousands of small industries have been aided by government loans and a number of large enterprises have sprung up in such industries as pesticides, fertiliser, alcohol, barge-building. The port of Mormugao has been expanded into one of the major harbours of western India, mainly for the export of iron ore.

Recent years have also witnessed the widespread distribution of electrical power. Being deficient in hydro-electric potential, Goa has been connected to the grids of neighbouring states. Prior to 1961, only three of Goa's 383 villages were electrified; by 1980 that figure has risen to 330.[12] Finally, the growth in other sectors of the economy and infrastructure has been accompanied by the development of a sound financial system. The Goa State Cooperative Bank Limited was established in 1963, and numerous Indian banks soon set up branches throughout the territory. By 1978, there were 216 bank branches with deposits of Rs.2 billion.[13]

With the rise in production of agricultural, mineral, and industrial commodities and the increased availability of finance and electric power, came other changes. The Indian government began building roads, bridges, and culverts. New forms of economic activity and a new style of administration brought many non-Goans to the region. Construction of houses and new government or institutional buildings became a thriving business. Although a few Goans departed with the Portuguese, many more returned from abroad after Liberation in order to establish homes and business. The tourist potential soon became apparent; hotels, restaurants, and associated businesses have expanded tremendously. The statistics in Table 1 gives some indication of the magnitude of economic change experienced by Goa since 1961.

As Goan society undergoes economic transformation, changes in one area lead to changes in others. There is a 'snowball effect', by which events move at an ever faster rate, each change allowing the overall process of transformation to unfold evermore quickly. Before discussing general social and political developments, let us examine three factors which are integral to the entire process: population, education, and transportation.

## Population

Between 1900 and 1960, Goa's population grew from 476,000 to 590,000, an increase of 114 thousand in 60 years.[14] The preliminary findings of the 1981 census revealed that Goa now has just over a million inhabitants[15]—which represents an increase of 410 thousand in only 20 years. The simple statistics obscure a much more complex feature. Owing to the lack of opportunities at home, many Goans had migrated for decades before 1961. Catholics went to Africa and the Gulf countries, as well as to the commercial centres of British India, particularly Bombay, Bangalore and Karachi. Hindus were more inclined to remain among their co-religionists in India than to emigrate abroad. In addition to the economic migrants, were the political dissidents, including opponents of the Portuguese regime and Hindus who felt handicapped by a generally pro-Catholic tone to Goan life.

In 1961, the wheel turned. People who strongly identified with Portugal, or who saw little opportunity for themselves in a Goa tied to India, left for Portugal and its African colonies—or for Brazil and North America. At the same time, other Goans returned to their newly liberated homeland, hoping for an economic and political renaissance. Those departing roughly balanced those who returned. Large numbers of Indian officials—initially both military and civilian, later mostly civilian—poured in. With the upsurge in economy activity, more and more non-Goans came to work in construction, mining and in the tourist and other industries that were springing up. White-collar workers and businessmen also arrived.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was growing feeling among Goans that they had become outnumbered and disadvantaged in their own region. They began to demand that places for native Goans be reserved in the public service and industry. But there are nearly 300,000 non-Goans in the region now, about 30 percent of the total population; and it is they who account for most of the rapid population increase.[16] And, because India upholds the right of any citizen to travel or shift his place of residence, there is unlikely to be a reversal of the present trend—unless, of course, there is a sudden and unexpected downturn in the Goan economy.

## Education

The Portuguese did little to develop the education system of Goa. At the time of Liberation, there was only one high school in the region—the Liceu Nacional in Panjim. The language of instruction

was Portuguese. While standards were high, the number of graduates, particularly Hindu graduates, was pitifully small. Graduation prepared one for a post in the local bureaucracy or for further studies in Portugal—an option open mainly to the well-to-do. For a good future in the Indian context, a young Goan studied English in a private school, crossing the border to continue his studies in that language. This explains why there was a larger number of Goans in British Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda than in Mozambique or Angola. For all intents and purposes, education prepared Goans for migration.

One of the major achievements of the India government since 1961—and certainly one of the most significant for the future—has been the rapid expansion of education in Goa. Where there used to be one secondary school, there are now 233.[17] Under the Portuguese, there was a medical school and one or two other institutions offering vocational or professional training; today there are 37 institutions at the tertiary level.[18] While many of the private primary schools operating in Marathi or English before 1961 (the language of government schools was strictly Portuguese) were simply converted to government schools after Liberation, the expansion of primary education was nonetheless truly impressive: in 1961-62, there were 176 government primary schools; the figure climbed to 601 in 1962-63; today extends at 1,155.[19]

Unfortunately, jobs have not increased as fast as educational opportunities. As a result, migration is still a major factor in Goan life today, and education has a marked effect on population patterns. Education and the need to migrate can also be linked to politics and the growth of regional identity. Goans who returned after 1961, now find their children again forced to leave to find work, while many non-Goans occupy well-paid positions in local government and industry. This situation has helped unite those who returned in 1961 with those who had remained in Goa under Portuguese rule.

Educated Goans and those with any sort of technical or service training go overseas, particularly to the Gulf countries. In many Goan homes, there are no husbands, brothers or sons—only small children, women and old men. While outsiders from other parts of India come to settle in Goa and take up the lower-paying jobs, the better educated Goans are moving to the US, Canada, Australia, or Britain to make their fortunes. (They can do so particularly because relatives displaced from Africa are already settled in these countries.) Though they have been liberated from a remote colonial power and reintegrated into India, Goans still tend to look to places outside India as 'the centre' where things really happen. This is a classic neo-

colonial pattern which occurs in many parts of Africa and Latin America. Goan regionalism and its history support the continuance of this pattern as does the sheer lack of opportunity for educated youth at home.

## Transportation

Like education, transportation facilities have expanded rapidly since 1961. The bridges and roads damaged by the retreating Portuguese were rapidly repaired. Since then, the total mileage of asphalt roads in Goa has increased by a factor of 6.8.[20] Several crucial bridges have been built, or are nearing completion, and river-ferry service has been expanded. Public transportation is far more available than was in the past. Buses and group taxis link major towns and many villages. Roads, airlines and sea routes link Goa to other parts of India, enabling the Goans to tap into India's ever-expanding economic network.

New transportation facilities have rendered the Goans far more mobile within their own region. They now can work in places many miles from their homes—at one time an impossibility. Similarly, students can now attend schools and colleges that were formerly available only to those few who could afford to be boarders. Increased transportation facilities have also encouraged the growth of industry, which in turn brings in outside labour and many non-Goan managers or small industrialists. As with factors of population and education, the developments in the field of transportation are intimately tied to general economic changes.

## Social and Political Developments

Goan society is made up of a number of groups in a complex web of relationships. It is not easy to sum up the situation in a few paragraphs. Briefly, there are three religious groups: Hindus (60 percent of the total); Catholics (38 percent); and Muslims (2 percent), who are mostly Sunni. Goans speak a large number of languages, including Konkani, Marathi, English, Portuguese, Hindi and Urdu. Konkani, an Indo-European language, should serve to unite the Goans; but because it is written in four different scripts, it often divides them—Hindus preferring the Devanagari, Catholics preferring the Roman.

Hindus and Catholics are both divided on a caste basis. The Brahmins and Chardos (Kshatriya) of both religions are, commonly, the dominant castes of their villages; as members of village associa-

tions, landowners and shopkeepers, they predominate among the modern, urban middle and upper classes. The Shudras make up most of the village population—farmers, tenant-cultivators, labourers, fishermen, toddy-tappers and craftsmen—and the bulk of wage labourers in the towns.

Among the lower castes is a large group who, while Catholic or Hindu, particularly resemble the tribal population of other areas of India. Known as 'Gavda' or 'Kunbi', they share much the same appearance, folk culture and socio-economic position, despite their different religious affiliations. Because of this, they may be said to form the solid base of Goan regional culture: Konkani-speaking, having a common world-view of a syncretic Hindu-Catholic variety, with a shared livelihood based on agriculture, fishing, and liquor-distilling.

The Census of India provides no information on caste, but two sources give some inkling of the numerical importance of these people. In Carambolim village, there were 3,639 inhabitants according to the 1971 census.[21] In 1974, that same village had 3,200 Gavdas, constituting the vast majority of the population.[22] In the Socio-Economic Survey of Verna, a village-survey monograph published as part of the 1971 census of India, there is a very useful table which gives another glimpse of the Gavda-Kunbi community. Verna had 752 households of which 718 were Catholic, 30 Hindu, and 4 Muslim. Among the Catholic households, 302 (or 42 percent) were Gavdas; 348 (48 percent) were Shudras and untouchables of several castes; and only 68 households (or 9 percent) were Brahmins.[23]

While the Gavda-Kunbi community comprises a large part of the rural population, in economic terms the Catholic and Hindu Brahmins predominate; it is they "who own most of the private lands in the village. They are also the *jono* holders of the village gaonkari, being the gaonkars or original inhabitants."[24] And it is the culture and traditions of the upper caste Catholics and Hindus, of course, which have been described and idealised as 'Goan culture'. Needless to say, there is a vast gulf between the 'great tradition' of the economically powerful upper castes and the 'little tradition' of the large majority of people.

Besides religious, linguistic and caste differences, there is a division in Goa between the Old Conquests (those areas occupied by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century) and the New Conquests (areas taken from the Marathas in the eighteenth century). Of Goa's eleven districts, four comprise the former and seven the latter. The Old Conquests suffered the brunt of forced conversions and the Inquisition and thus are more 'Catholic' than the other areas which were acquired at a less zealous period of Portuguese history. There

are also more fertile, have a more pleasant climate and were generally more beloved and favoured by the Portuguese. Even today, the Old Conquests receive greater attention; the bulk of industry is located there, as are most of the educational, medical, banking and other facilities. Well over 50 percent of the population lives there; and the total rises to 68 percent when we include the one agriculturally rich district of the New Conquests, Ponda.[25] The New Conquests, by contrast, are sparsely populated, overwhelmingly Hindu, and have the mines and forests that keep the coastal districts prospering. The unevenness of change and development between the Old and New Conquests is a continuing problem.

Events since 1961 have resulted in substantial social change in Goa. A section of the Catholic elite and nearly all the *mestizo*, or mixed-race population departed. Hindus and those Catholics who fought against Portuguese rule assumed a larger role in political and economic life. The economic changes detailed above, together with changes in population, education and transportation, created a new class entrepreneurs, professionals, managers, and administrators with ties to their counterparts in the rest of India. Upper caste Catholics and Hindus who did not adjust to new conditions and did not appreciate the magnitude of changes about to take place, became a backward-looking class of rentiers and functionaries, nostalgic for the peace and stability of colonial times and their lost prestige, critical of the crassness of capitalism.

A small number of families became inordinately rich and powerful, and will be discussed later. For the mass of agricultural and maritime producers and labourers, the end of Portuguese rule meant an end to a system to social structures kept them permanently in a subordinate position. Since 1961, these people have been emerging from the shell of traditional relationships. They are migrating to the larger towns, attending schools, and filling the low-level jobs in commerce and administration. Above all, they no longer squat self-effacingly before the threshold: they have entered the doorway.

Goa now is in the throes of rapid urbanisation. In 1960, only 14.7 percent of the population was classified as urban; by 1971, the figure was 25.5 percent; in 1981, 32.1 percent.[26] Part of this growth is due to the influx of outsiders; but, as in so many other Third World countries, rural people are flocking to the towns in the hope of finding jobs. Urban areas in Goa grew at the rate of 58.5 percent between 1971 and 1981. The corresponding figure for rural areas was only 15 percent.[27]

Colonial Goa was authoritarian and outwardly-oriented to Portugal and its other colonies. Power was centralised in the hands of

the Portuguese politico-military authorities, who received their directions from Lisbon. In less than a year after Liberation, Indian authorities had organised village level elections and begun the process of integrating Goa into the democratic patterns of the rest of India. Since then, Goans have become fully familiar with the electoral process. Political parties have emerged and manoeuvred for power.

This essay is not the place to narrate political events of the last twenty years. Suffice to say that the parties have tended to be centred around particular personalities or communal (religious, caste, linguistic) groups. An early move to merge Goa with neighbouring was decisively defeated in 1967. The party favouring merger remained in power until 1979 however. Starting as a champion of the previously out-of-favour Hindus and lower castes and of the Marathi language, the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak ('Maharashtrian Goa') Party gradually changed its tune. By the time of its fall from power in 1979, the party was considered as corrupt, dominated by one person, and narrowly communal—in favour of low caste Hindus alone. Above all it had reached a modus vivendi with the big families.

One might add that such a relationship between government and capital is not unknown in the rest of India. We may note that this relationship marks a basic difference between and pre-1961 Goan society of today. Under the Portuguese, local capitalists were weak or non-existent, emerging only in the last ten years of colonial rule. Even during the brief period of economic growth in the 1950s, Goa's government was distant from Goan industry and business, all decisions ultimately being made in Lisbon. The current arrangement, which we shall discuss at a greater length below, is a clear sign of Goa's transformation from a colonial to a bourgeois-capitalist mode of existence.

With this general overview of changes in Goa since 1961, let us now examine five areas in more detail in order to get a clearer picture of the process of capitalist penetration and transformation of Goan society. The five areas (which are closely interrelated) are: the big families, fishing, the gaonkari, cultural expression and tourism.

## The Big Families Dominate

After the end of World War II, two factors came to influence Goa's future more than any others: first, the Japanese needed iron ore to rebuild their economy; second, as we have noted, the Portuguese realised that the only way to forestall the increasing Indian demands for their departure was to create a class of Goans with a large stake in a 'Portuguese future'. The plan worked well.

A handful of small-businessmen, traditional landowners, and war profiteers received iron ore mining licenses, and were encouraged to dig and ship the ore to Japan. Families with names like Dempo, Chowgule, and Salgaocar moved into diverse enterprises and industries. Several of the family heads were decorated or honoured by Portugal for their industrial achievements. All were the creations of Portuguese policy.

Yet, as Goa went through the traumas of takeover after 1961, the big families hardly missed a step. Not only were they not penalised in any direct sense but, in effect, they were rewarded for it. Goan mine-owners were allowed to keep possession of their mines and to expand their activities at will. They became the only private mine-owners in India.

From 1961 on, these controllers of the major wealth of the territory came to control its politics as well. Foremost among such powerful men was Dayanand Bandodkar, a wealthy Hindu mine-owner and a friend of the Portuguese. Becoming the first chief minister, he and his daughter were to rule Goa until 1979. A man of low caste with the populist flair, Bandodkar adopted the platform of Goa's merger with Maharashtra. This position was championed largely by Hindus who felt they had been discriminated against under the former regime and who believed that a merger with the huge Hindu majority of Maharashtra would put an end to Catholic domination forever.

After Bandodkar's MG party won a majority in the new legislative assembly in 1963, questions of control of the wealth and natural resources of Goa did not arise, as the issues of development and merger were kept at centre-stage. Bandodkar and his fellow industrialists attempted to shape public opinion through their newspapers (there are almost no independent papers in Goa) and through tertiary educational institutions which they themselves had established. The Chowgules, for example, launched the newspapers *Gomantak* and *Uzvadd*, and were founders of an arts and science college at Margao; the Salgaocars founded a law college; and the Dempos own *The Navhind Times* and *Navprabha*, and are involved in Dhempe College at Miramar.

When the proposal to merge Goa with Maharashtra was defeated, Bandodkar and his party made a complete about-face. They now declared their support for Statehood, a separate Goa University and recognition of Konkani as one of the constitutionally recognised national languages. Throughout, the big families have profited because Goa remained a Union Territory without a full state administrative and ministerial apparatus and without a governor—who, as

a potentially powerful figure with no local ties, would be difficult to win over.

By 1978, Dempo was the fastest growing business house in India, with a real annual growth rate of 33 percent, though it only ranked 38 in size. Salgaocars was growing at the rate of 18 percent a year.[28] Chowgules, in addition to a mammoth iron ore pelletisation plant built on prime agricultural land, had thirteen companies in several states with branch offices in fifteen cities. On the occasions of their birthdays or the launching of yet another project or company, the newspapers in Goa are full of sickly praise, endorsements from employees and smaller fry in the business world and photographs of the magnets toward with politicians and bureaucrats from Delhi. The lieutenant governor (the highest administrator in Goa) and chief ministers grace weddings and other social events put on by the industrialists, there mingling with dignitaries from Japan, Portugal, and other countries. The Japanese send arm-twisting missions from time to time to hasten the expansion of port facilities so that more ore can be loaded more quickly. They are greeted by the industrialists, garlanded, and called friends and partners. The Japanese talk about a 'close family relationship'.[29]

The concrete results of this 'family relationship' may be seen in the luxurious lifestyles enjoyed by the industrialist families. They may also be seen in the "ravaging of Goa's splendid mountains and forests, the pollution of Goa's rivers and the reduced life-span of the Goan miner."[30]

Iron ore mining in Goa is open-cut mining and there is virtually no control over environmental destruction. Protests against pollution are ignored (the one successful anti-pollution movement was waged against an outside-owned company, Zuari Agro-Chemical). Labour unrest is treated harshly as well. Goa's economy is now linked intimately to Japan's. The big capitalist families created by the former colonial power have continued to thrive by playing the role of agents for foreign capitalist interests. Besides their own profit-making activities, they have created a climate for capitalist penetration of fishing and tourism. Needless to say, an appreciation of the strength of the big families and their links to both foreign capitalism and local government is essential to an understanding of Goa since 1961.

## Fishing Traditions and Wars

The sea off Goa is rich in life, and fish and crustaceans have always been an important part of the traditional Goan diet. Fishermen live in self-sufficient communities along the palm-fringed shore and make a good living in normal times. In 1973, there were 1091 traditional craft (though this is probably an underestimate) of which 70 percent were under two tonnes in weight.[31] In an ostensible effort to increase the protein supply for India's population at large and to raise coastal living standards in general, the Indian government's planners decided to increase the fish catch by encouraging mechanisation. I have argued elsewhere that this decision was related to an entire philosophy of development that emphasises production rather than distribution and stems from an addiction to Western models.[32] In any event the Central government encouraged people who wanted to operate trawlers (mechanised fishing craft other than the traditional craft with an outboard motor added).

Loans were given on generous terms, but they were still far beyond the capacity of traditional fishermen. The result was that trawlers were purchased by small local capitalists—those with small businesses, transport companies or manufacturing companies. And these small businessmen were often financed by politicians and big capitalists in return for a share of the profits. In 1979, there were about 400 trawlers operating from Goa—about four per kilometre of coast line. Most of them, as Goa's Director of Fisheries confirmed, were "owned by 'moneyed unwanted elements' and not by traditional fishermen."[33]

One important result of mechanisation has been the growth of the canning and export industry. Instead of increasing the protein supply for Indians and improving the lives of Goan fishermen, mechanisation led to the establishment of canneries and the export of frozen fish and prawns. By the mid-1970s, the export of frozen prawns alone amounted to several million rupees a year. Reaping the profits were a handful of companies employing very few people; and the people they did employ were brought from other parts of India in order to ensure a more pliant labour force.

Foreign-aid programmes and joint ventures with more developed nations are linked to this process. Foreign governments design their aid programmes to encourage the import of trawlers and equipment in the hope of absorbing much of the seafood produced. Mechanised fishing has become a major industry with strong ties to the manufacturers of trawlers and associated equipment. Again, we find post-1961 changes marked by growing capitalist penetration of

a traditional economy and increasing ties to a world-wide system of markets.

In all of this, the benefits to Goans and the Goan fisherman in particular are minimal. The canneries pollute the rivers and surrounding areas. The trawlers, instead of going out to sea where tradition craft cannot operate, have been used to deplete in-shore, traditional fishing grounds where they have destroyed nets and killed small fish and egg stocks.

To protest such developments, an organisation was founded in 1974 by a group of social-minded middle class teachers and students—people who were politicised several months previously in the anti-pollution struggle against Zuari Agro-Chemicals. Ever since then, this organisation has fought to obtain recognition for the rights of traditional fishermen and corresponding regulation over trawler activity. The pleas of the traditional fishermen for a long time fell largely on deaf ears. Laws have now been passed, but it remains to be seen if they will be enforced. When desperate fishermen resorted to violence in 1979, the authorities harshly overreacted. Given the interests of some Goan politicians and their connections with trawler owners—and given the strength of foreign interests, the lure of foreign exchange and the behind-the-scenes influence of the big families—the sorry history of Goa's fishing industry is not surprising.

## Decline of the 'Gaonkari'

Before the Portuguese conquest, Goan villages were organised in a community system known as gaonkari. Rather than abolishing the system, the Portuguese, in fact, preserved it under the name of communidades and by the twentieth century it had become incredibly complex and unwieldy. It is impossible to do justice in this essay to the complexities and far-reaching ramifications of this system.

Each village might have its own particular history, but basically the village associations were run by gaonkars, the male members of the dominant caste. Some gaonkari units decided "that their male descendants should be enrolled (on) completing a certain age (with the unit) regularly dividing the income equally among all enrolled persons. Whereas in others it was established that a certain amount from the income should be set aside to be distributed among the successors of every original family (who were) known Vangors,"[34]

Amounts were given for the support of village craftsmen and for the temple or church. The gaonkari units were responsible for maintaining roads, drainage and irrigation systems, public security,

religious institutions—and, under the Portuguese for supporting education and public health as well.

However successful in its time, the system had developed serious problems by 1961. "The Portuguese government insisted on observance of old traditions...without paying heed to the fact that villages had ceased to be occupied only by the gaonkars, that (the latter) constituted an insignificant minority in the villages and that the (structure of the villages) was totally modified."[35] Non-gaonkars—the tenants who rented gaonkari land and the labourers who did the actual work—had no say in the running of the village association affairs. In 1956, a Portuguese agricultural mission found that tenancy rates in Goa were extremely high, ranging from 75 to 98.5 percent tillers.[36] There were altogether 224 gaonkari units in the territory, the number in each district varying greatly. Fifty-five per cent of them were in the four districts of the Old Conquest—which also contained nearly half the paddy fields in Goa.[37] Throughout Goa, then, many villages were dominated by the gaonkars, who controlled the production and distribution of much of the regions agricultural wealth.

After 1961, the Indian government took quick measures to reduce the power of the gaonkari. Rents collectible by village associations were reduced, and the previous system of annual public auction of gaonkari-owned plots was abolished. The Goa, Daman and Diu Agricultural Tenancy Act (1964) established security of tenancy and fixed rent rates; it held that, while landlords would pay land tax, tenants would pay irrigation taxes and be responsible for the maintenance of bunds. (The Act applied to private owners as well as gaonkari). Since then, several other 'land-to-the-tiller' laws have been enacted. The Goa, Daman and Diu Mundkars (Protection from Eviction) Act (1975) stopped evictions and gave tenants the right to purchase their house sites. Landlords fought the acts (and some excessive observances of them) in court. In 1979, the major 'land-to-the-tiller' law was declared unconstitutional: landlords now could demand the arrears owed them. The tenants appealed, and the fight continues.

There are both positive and negative aspects to the decline of gaonkari since 1961. On the positive side, an outdated agricultural system has been weakened, if not destroyed. The way has been cleared for many more Goans to farm their own land—many of them from the lower castes. Land ownership will undoubtedly give them a sense of pride and security that they have never had. The old gaonkars often ploughed their wealth into houses and items of consumption rather than back into the land. Under the new ar-

rangements, production may well be higher—if the small private landholders can obtain the necessary capital and the technology. For tenants, conditions have improved considerably; absentee landlordism has greatly declined. All of these outcomes can be seen as justifying the recent changes.

Nevertheless, change has not been all for the good. Reforms were undertaken without a thorough analysis of what might happen if gaonkari disappeared, and there have been a number of unanticipated and negative side-effects of change. While many Goans may benefit in the short run from the demise of the gaonkari, in the absence of any alternative institution of a more democratic nature, Goans may lose out in the long run in terms of both quality of land and quality of life. Without the organisation and finances of the gaonkari, it has been difficult to maintain the irrigation and flood-control systems; as a result, thousands of acres have been damaged or destroyed by flooding or salination. The decline in gaonkari income has been reflected in the decline in village cultural and religious activity, the disappearance of church music-schools, and the deterioration of valuable architectural monuments. (On the other hand, upper caste culture is no longer so dominant; lower caste groups, particularly the Gavda-Kunbi community, are freer to develop in their own ways.) The gaonkari common lands, which are not rented out for agricultural purposes, have been subject to speculative manipulation by politicians, land dealers, and construction firms. The communal forests are now cut by individuals for private gain, as the gaonkari has become a mere shadow of its former self, unable to control the behaviour of its members and others.

Land reform in Goa has been carried out more thoroughly than in many other parts of India. The gaonkari aside, private landlords were usually owners of ten acres or less. They controlled 90 percent of holdings in 1971.[38] While this figure is the same as for the rest of India, Goa's history and particular evolution produced different results. In other states, the large landholders often had strong political influence and were able to prevent land reforms from affecting them. In Goa, neither the landlords nor the gaonkari were powerful beyond their villages. They were members of the higher castes, and many of them were Catholics. These factors also mitigated against their building political ties to the post-1961 lower caste, Hindu-oriented leadership. In Goa, then, even small landlords lost their fields and sometimes their houses to tenants. Long-running litigation has prevented erstwhile tenants from investing in improvements and erstwhile landlords from selling out and doing something else.

Capital in Goa comes from destruction of land, not from the careful use of it. The families whose wealth derives from mining remain unaffected by land reforms. Their concessions remain valid; they can buy whatever new land they need. Destruction of the land by mining activities goes hand in hand with the decline of the gaonkari, the only indigenous organisation that might have ameliorated the situation through coordinated action.

## Cultural Expression Changes

With regard to both individual and group modes of cultural expression, the process of socialisation and the reinforcement of Goan regional culture has undergone considerable change. Some modes of cultural expressions have nearly disappeared, other have been played down, still others have emerged to take their place. Not only are the media changing, but also the values, attitudes, behavioral patterns, and expectations of life that they transmit.

Before 1961, 'cultured' Goans wrote, spoke, and sang in Portuguese if they were Catholic, and in Marathi if they were Hindu. Konkani, while beloved as the mother tongue of all Goans, was not encouraged by the Portuguese, and it remained the language of the folk culture, both Hindu and Catholic. Since higher education was only available in Portuguese (unless one left Goa) a number of Hindus also learned that language. Portuguese-speaking Goans never constituted more than a handful of the population; in 1961, for example, less than two percent of the people claimed Portuguese as their mother tongue.[39] Still there was a vast quantity of Portuguese-language material available—newspapers, journals, books. And educated Goans generally looked to Portugal and Europe for intellectual stimulation; they read Eça de Queiroz, Pessoa, Camoes, and Almeida Garrett. The Central Library in Panjim still has a large collection of world literature (now very dog-eared) in Portuguese.

With the end of Portugal's rule came the sudden demise of Portuguese as a functional language in Goa. All official contact with Portugal ceased for fourteen years. No Portuguese books, magazines or newspapers from abroad were available. Portuguese is hardly taught in the schools—though this is less due to official policy and more the result of a widespread desire to learn English, clearly the language of the future. Even though this century has seen a flowering of Konkani literature—both in Roman and Devanagari scripts—the new languages of education are English and Marathi, not Konkani. In fact, most Goans are opposed to Konkani being made the language of instruction in schools.[40]

Thus Goans have traded one foreign language for another, and have adopted a neighbouring regional language instead of their own. Given economic realities, this situation is likely to persist—despite the strong pressures from Konkani language organisations, English has spread in a way that Portuguese never did, due to its use in the rest of India and much of the world and because of the ready availability of English-language books, magazines, newspapers, films and radio broadcasts.

Turning to other forms of cultural expression, we find more evidence of a fundamental transformation since 1961. As elsewhere in India and the world, the change has been from the religious to the secular, from the rural to the urban, and from emphasis on the group to emphasis on the individual. Traditional stage-plays—immensely enjoyed in Goa, as they are in Maharashtra—have shifted from religious themes to those of romantic love and consumerism, accompanied by a new Goan pop music, a combination of Western rock and local folk songs. Hindi films and film music have achieved tremendous popularity and wide influence among the youth. Besides introducing a rudimentary knowledge of Hindi, they represent the cultural accompaniment of the economic goings on in Goan society. They stress individual problems and desires—particularly of the romantic variety—and escapism. Hindi films encourage consumerism by consistently glorifying urban life and frequently presenting traditional rural styles or values in a derisive way.

Changes in the economic, political and social structures have been accompanied by a rapid decline in traditional crafts. Former *patrao* have left Goa or are no longer prosperous. Factory-produced articles are cheaper, or appeal because they are 'new'. Architectural styles have changed as well. Few new buildings are constructed in the traditional Indo-Portuguese style, and many of the old ones have fallen into disrepair or have already been demolished. The towns are filling up with concrete blocks that look old before they are finished. Panjim, Margao, Mapusa and Vasco more and more resemble towns in other parts of Western India.

Regarding socialisation and reinforcement of Goan regional culture and identity, we have already touched upon many of the relevant factors. Language, films, music, and theatre all play important roles in establishing cultural identity. Another important area, of course, is religion, particularly religious festivals. These festivals—saints' days for Catholics and *zatras* for Hindus—provide the participants with a set of moods and motivations conveyed by a single cultural style, giving them a chance to move briefly from daily routine and normal structure to a transitory, more ideal world outside mun-

dane reality. Such occasions create an atmosphere of excitement, even favour, in which people have a chance to approach their god's and their inner selves, to learn something about their own society through the festival 'texts'.[41]

Though in content the Catholic and Hindu traditions differ greatly, in form and style they have tended to move closer together over the past few centuries in Goa. There has emerged a syncretic Goan style, which has helped forge a common Goan identity despite religious difference. This development has been most pronounced among the lower castes, but large numbers of higher caste Hindus and Catholics also take part in certain key religious festivals, worshipping and honouring the same deities—in particular, the goddess Shanta Durga and Our Lady of the Miracles.

Saints' days and zatras are attended by hundreds of thousands of Goans. Yet the amount of attention they receive in the modern media is scant indeed. It is fair to say that any society has its dramatic forms in which certain cultural lessons or messages are played out for large numbers of people. One need only think of American football, the bullfights of Iberian cultures, the Balinese cockfights and cremations, or the ritual games of Amazon Indians. Indeed, some writers have argued that in simpler, less mobile societies, there is dramatic or dramatical content in daily life per se.[42] The transformation of Goan society can be expected to produce new forms of expression. One area which looks promising is local party politics, non-existent before 1961. There is a great variety of political expression, involving many popular symbols and identities. The 'drama' of Goan politics is always present in the newspapers and often on the streets as well—in the form of parades, celebrations, demonstrations, strikes, sit downs, blockades, and occasional riots. All of these are expressive of the plethora of new ideas, values, and problems that have come to Goa.

The Goan cultural tradition in all its forms—Hindus, Catholic, and syncretic—is under great pressure because of the changes in economic, social, and political structures, and the new patterns of population, education, and transportation. As noted earlier, there has been a rapid decline in the influence of gaonkari and in its ability to sponsor traditional cultural activities. Commercial styles of all-India or international derivation, tied to the mass media, have largely replaced the unique forms of cultural expression that gave Goa its regional identity.

## Mass Tourism Destroys

At the same time that Goa reels under the impact of massive change, it is being vigorously promoted as a tourist paradise. In such a situation, ironies abound. While vast tracts of the territory are being turned into a moonscape, it is being touted as a 'lush garden' and 'almost miraculously unspoiled'. As the interesting Luso-Indian architecture of the towns is replaced by concrete blocks of exceptional ugliness, Goan urban charms are advertised as 'nearly Mexican'. As politics, pollution, mass media, and the increase of population pose mounting problems, Goa is referred to as a 'place outside time'.[43] But the ironies of tourism are not limited to the dubious claims of brochures. Because the big families have not gone into the hotel business in a serious way, chains operated by Indian corporations from other parts of the country have taken over. Construction of huge luxury hotels has resulted in: the alienation of land from traditional owners, the disruption of village life, tremendous inflation (because of the high prices that foreigners and rich Indians are willing to pay), and the commercialization of local culture.

Goa has been a tourist destination for many years, but only recently has it begun to suffer from mass tourism, the sure destroyer. Over the years there have been essentially three types of visitors to Goa. First, there were the Goans returning home on leave from their far-flung diaspora—reaching floodtide when the Bombay shops and offices let out for the holidays. This type of tourist brought new ideas and goods into Goan society, but was not disruptive. A few years after Liberation, Goa was discovered by disaffected, adventurous Western youth, loosely termed 'hippies'. Their nudism, drugs, and rock music shocked Goan sensibilities. Nevertheless, while the appearance of some seaside villages changed, the local people remained in control of the tourist trade, and socio-economic structures were not altered drastically.

It is the third type of tourism which has brought about severe economic, social, and cultural dislocation. This is the more recent mass tourism by well-to-do individuals or groups who want little or nothing to do with Goan life—visitors cocooned in luxury hotels built on former village land, staffed by former fishermen, toddy-tappers, and farmers, and supplied by the 'more reliable' sources outside the territory.

The greatest irony of all is that even the official advertisements urge people to visit Goa now, before it is spoilt. It seems almost inevitable that the burgeoning tourist 'infrastructure' will overwhelm and destroy the very place the tourists are coming to see.

## Uncertain Ultimate Solution

Looking back over the changes which have occurred in Goa since 1961, it is difficult not to derive a sense of pessimism. But we ought not to focus only on the negative. Like the rest of India, Goa is on the move. Its human potential is outstanding, as is its capacity for increased agricultural and industrial production. India and Goa threw off their colonial shackles and opted for change and a better life for all. The ideal is inspiring and seemingly attainable. The problem lies in the selection of the best means to achieve the goals.

India in general and Goa in particular have yet to discover that necessary combination of organisation and ideology which can ease their present difficulties and free them from their disadvantageous ties with the developed economies of Europe, America and Japan. Goa is firmly caught in bourgeois-capitalist society having leapt from a traditional-colonial order in the space of a very few years. Much of the change it has experienced so far has not resulted in a better life for all. An increase in money supply and a broadened economic base have been paid for in a decline of peace, order, cleanliness, and Goan identity. Goa's position as one of the regional cultures of India is not yet seriously threatened, but strains are appearing. As in other areas of India, mass education, rapid urbanisation, and the decline of the traditional village socio-economic system has led to a loss of direction, an alienation, a loneliness amidst the crowd that is assuaged in part by films, sport, politic theatrics.

Bourgeois-capitalism may offer no more effective a remedy to Goa's needs then did stagnant Portuguese colonialism. The ultimate solution remains uncertain. The only sure thing is that Goa will remain quintessentially Indian, tied by history, economics, politics, language, social structure, and culture to the rest of the subcontinent. It is in that context that it must seek its future.

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8

# *Popular Protest and the Free Goa Press*

**Frederick Noronha**

In today's world, one has to increasingly depend on other people's experience and interpretation to get to know of events. Mass media play a decisive role in disseminating these experiences. They help by making sense of complexities and making the incomprehensible comprehensible. They can make political contexts understandable. Or, they can choose to obfuscate them by preventing insight.[1]

Magnus Enzensberger contrasts what he calls the 'emancipatory use of the media' with the 'repressive use of the media'.[2]

How does the Press in Goa respond to social concerns and public protest? Undeniably, its reportage plays an ever more important part. Stands taken, subtly or otherwise, in reporting protest issues play a big role in (a) influencing crucial public opinion and (b) determining the outcome of protest. Understanding this requires a comprehensive look at both, protest movements in Goa and the finer nuances in the coverage, given or not. This essay is an attempt to study the editorial attitudes of local English-language newspapers towards protest over a three-decade period, 1963 to 1993.

For this three-decade period, an attempt is made to look at the three major daily English-language newspapers which were published: *The Navhind Times* (NT, referred to from 1963-83), *O Heraldo or Herald* (H, for the period 1984-87) and *Gomantak Times* (GT, for 1988-93). In a few cases, relevant issues of these newspapers were missing from the files of the Central Library at Panjim, hampering this effort a little.

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*An unusually detailed examination of the subject, this paper was presented at a seminar on "Press and the People" held at Quepem, Goa in April 1994.*

Some 'protests' have been deliberately kept out of this discussion. Issues excluded are those over which sections of the population were pitted against each other, and the protests were of a sectarian kind. For instance, issues not looked at here include the merger-anti-merger issue in the 1960s, the demands for a 'Vishal Gomantak' or Greater Goa (incorporating parts of the neighbouring states) and Statehood put up by various political groupings, and the explosive Konkani-versus-Marathi language agitation in the 1980s.

In such cases, the local newspapers took varying, sometimes opposite, stands—often more linked to their circulation interests and their perceived readership base. Sometimes, particularly in the case of the language agitation, some of the newspapers themselves played a key role in stoking the 'protest', with varied motives.

## Rapid Social Change and Scope for Protest

Portuguese colonialism (and the Salazar dictatorship) ended in Goa in December 1961. This, together with the soon-introduced Indian-style parliamentary democracy (despite its many limitations) gave people an opportunity to collectively organise and protest on a range of issues.

Goa leapt from its traditional-colonial order to being a bourgeois-capitalist society in the space of a very few years. As Goa reeled under the impact of massive change,[3] citizens found themselves responding actively to a number of issues. Though few issues are remembered today, right from the early '60s, there have been a number of cases where citizens in Goa have risen in protest. Below is a list that has been compiled from issues highlighted by editorial writers. It does not claim to be a comprehensive list, but is indicative.

## Brief Calender of Protest Movements and Issues Agitated

*1963:* Dalits' temple entry; Port workers' strike; Land reforms; Police brutalities (taxi driver case)

*1964:* Land reforms; Students' issues (pharmacy); Mormugao bargemen's strike; Toddy tappers' protest

*1965:* Toddy tappers' protest; Land reforms

*1966:* Toddy tappers' issue; Protest against 'deputationists'; Government employees' strike

*1967:* Mundkar Bill; Barge crew strike

*1968:* Goa Compensatory Allowance; Taximen's strike

*1969:* Police excesses (Union leader's death); Bargemen's strike; Medico's GMC protest

*1970*: Hippies; Land reforms; Taximen's strike; Navy: Vasco land dispute

*1971:* Teachers/govt.staff protest; Hippies

*1972*: Hippies; Teachers' protest

*1973:* Velsao coast pollution (fish mortality) (See: ZAC pollution); Hippies

*1974:* Hippies; Borim (Coca-Cola) strike; (First ever) Goa Bandh; Teachers' grade issue; ZAC pollution

*1975:* Port and dock strike; ZAC pollution; Hippies, drugs; *[EMERGENCY DECLARED];* Ramponkars' agitation

*1976:* Hippies, nudism, drugs; Ramponkars' agitation

*1977:* Hippies, drugs, nudism; Students' protests (Mapusa, Margao, Panjim); Ramponkars' agitation (Chain hunger strike)

*1978:* Ramponkars' agitation; Hippies; Students' protests (Food Craft Inst., fee hike); Sanjivani factory pollution; Students' anti-University fee hike protests; Major ports strike

*1979:* Teachers' grade issue; Ramponkars' agitation; College teachers' strike

*1980* Ramponkars' agitation; Doctors-GMC admission norms; Students: marks scandal

*1981:* ZAC workers' strike; Teachers' grade issue; Students: ATKT issue

*1982:* Unions: police protest; Students: Collem case/Margao fast Vasco (anti-migrant) riots

*1983*: Carnival (Church opposition); Protests over CHOG(M); (Candolim land takeover)

*1984:* Carnival; Dockmen's strike; Capitation college (Vodithala)

*1985*: Carnival; Goa University plans; Environment; Luxury tourism; Charter flights; Pavement dwellers

*1986:* Carnival; Sex-determination tests; Municipal strike; Comunidades; Five-star tourism; Trade unions: Dr Datta Samant

*1987*: Trade unions: Datta Samant; Carnival; AIDS first cases; Five-star tourism boom; Tourism Master Plan protests

*1988:* Tourism-linked problems; Xendrem (Shah resort) protest; Environment (big dams, gas leak, Kaiga N-plant)

*1989*: Tourism: Air India calendar; Nylon 6,6; AIDS: detention

laws; Xendrem protest; Comunidades' action; BVM scandal; Molestation scam

*1990:* Konkan Railway; Students' protests (Architecture college, Vocational courses); Carnival; Medium of Instruction; Unions: Police-wives; Nylon 6,6

*1991:* Comunidades; Carnival protests; Privatisation of beaches; Freddy Peat Scandal (child sexual abuse); Kaiga nuclear plant; Konkan Railway; Shipyard workers' fight

*1992:* Konkan Railway; Crimes against women; Nylon 6,6; Students: Dental (ragging); Carnival; Beach parties; Indu Desai murder (Canacona); Sanquelim (health service riots)

*1993*: Bauxite mining; Police excesses; Carnival; Coastal/building regulations; Konkan Railway; ESMA misuse; Farmers' problems; Pollution on beaches; Xendrem protest; Police brutalities (KRC issues)

Let us now take a closer look at the editorial stances taken on some of the more prominent issues and protests listed above.

## Trade Union Protests

Perhaps, trade unions have got a raw deal most consistently from the Goa Press in terms of editorial treatment. Given the nature of Press ownership (many proprietors have wide industrial and commercial interests) this is perhaps not very surprising.

As early as in the tenth issue of publication of the first ever English-language newspaper in Goa, labour got a tongue-lashing for faults, real or perceived. Consider the following *Turning searchlight inwards*, (NT, Feb 27, 1963):

"Perhaps in no part of the world are labourers and artisans so slack, irresponsible and slipshod as here in Goa. While in (the rest of) India a workman slogs for anything from eight to ten hours, here in Goa he puts in less than six hours. He arrives at work when he pleases, and often has the impudence to tell the hirer (*sic*) that if he does not like his way he has to lump it. This is because he knows very well that labour is in short supply and he is in much demand. In the villages particularly, the labourer, since Liberation, has become a dictator..."

This attitude comes out all the more strongly when protesting workers are linked to the mining/Mormugao port-barge sectors. In

such cases, the editorials campaigned for "firm action" *Firm action necessary*, (NT, May 27, 1964), played up the "serious situation" at the harbour *Serious situation in harbour*, (NT, June 16, 1964), argued that labour protests would "harm the economy", and warned against any "misplaced...sympathies for labour" *Wanted action at once*, (NT, July 18, 1964).

Again in July 1964, the Goa government got accolades from the Press for its "action" after labour leaders were arrested under the stringent and controversial Defence of India Rules. Not satisfied, the editorial went on to press: "This action in itself is not enough." *Well done*, (NT, July 19, 1964).

Repeatedly, such unsympathetic—or openly hostile—stands greeted various labour protests. Some other sections of the working class to face such a hostile press include: Port/dock workers—Nov.'64, Sept.'68, Feb.'74, Jan.'75, Apr.'89; Toddy tappers—Apr.'65, Jan.'66; Railwaymen—Dec.'65; Govt. employees—Nov.'65, Jun.'66, Mar.'71; Barge crews—Nov.'67, Mar.'69; Taximen—Aug.'68; Teachers—Mar. and Sept.'72; Coca Cola workers—Feb.'74; GMC doctors—Aug.'80, Nov.'91; ZAC workers—Jan.'81; Workers' Coordination Committee—Nov.'81; Nurses—Dec.'83; Journalists—May'85; Municipal workers—Jul.'86; MRF workers—1986-87; and Electricity Department engineers—Feb.'93.

At times, protesting workers were warned that they would "loose sympathy" of the public. At other times, they were told that "strikes or threats of strike have seldom achieved the desired goal". Teacher-protesters were sought to be persuaded *Teachers and morchas*, (NT, Jan 30, 1971) against going on a protest march. Reason: "Their struggle has to be in a dignified manner—for, they are, after all, teachers..."

One striking example was vis-a-vis the attempt by the Bombay-based trade unionist, Datta Samant to enter the labour field in Goa.

In October 1986, one of the newspapers *Industrial relations in Goa*, (H, Oct 8, 1986) editorially suggested that the government "ban" the entry of Dr Samant into Goa. Plans by Dr Samant to take over the leadership of a trade union of a prominent industrial unit in this state were likened to "new terrorism in trade unions". Employers were warned about the impact of Dr. Samant's leadership, and the issue of the "acute unemployment" being faced in Goa was also raised along with warnings over Dr Samant's entry. *New terrorism in trade unions*, (H, Oct 23, 1986). Early in 1987, a strongly-worded editorial, declared that "Goa cannot afford Dr Samant" (H, Jan.26, 1987). It went on to chide other industrialists for their "complacency" in not

responding with alacrity towards the leader a section of Goa's working-class had opted for.

In certain cases, like when medicos protested (June 1967) or when the Goa Special Allowance was sought to be stopped, the Press backed the affected sections. In such cases, it would appear that the influence of the group undertaking the protests (medicos and the already-growing number of influential, largely middle-class government servants, respectively) played a crucial role in the editorial stand taken towards the protests. Besides, the 'form' of the protest may have influenced the editorial position; in these cases, the demands made by the affected groups were more in the form of petitions, rather than of a protest type.

In certain other cases too, editorials were selectively supportive. For instance, workers act the Coca-Cola bottling plant at Borim got some support in the initial stage of their protests, before they called Goa's first ever Goa-bandh *The Government must act*, (NT, Jan 31, 1974). Similarly, teachers' woes were described under a telling title *'The forgotten people'*, (NT, March 25, 1975), after they had been lambasted in 1972.

Some working-class protests, it would seem, were considered to be "more-equal" than others. In one odd case, a newspaper was warmly supportive editorially of the workers "victory" in distant Poland *Polish workers' victory*, (NT, Sept. 2, 1960) despite otherwise being consistently critical of most labour attempts at protest here.

Petitioning, without protests, often drew editorial support. Plans to withdraw scheduled protests also drew appreciative edits. The newspapers appeared to be more sympathetic to labour when they either felt the need to build circulations, or their ownership interests were unconnected with the protesting sections. (For instance, *Dockmen's strike*, (H, March 21, 1984) and *The police surely need a better deal*, (GT, March 10, 1990).

## Police Brutalities

Seldom did the Press think it fit to editorially discuss police atrocities, even though other quarters thought this issue was serious enough to merit publication of an entire volume dealing with this subject.[4]

Some exceptions were noticeable. One early editorial (NT, April 6, 1963) recorded a charge of "police highhandedness" against a taxi-driver, who faced third-degree methods under the Mapusa police. The edit strongly condemned this incident "if the charge...is true". But

here too, attention was first focussed on the matter by a taxi drivers' union strike. In March 1969 however, the death of trade union leader J B X D'Cruz in police custody was not seen as warranting editorial comment.

In contrast, editorial attention was twice drawn to a case embarrassing to a trade union leader. It was the torture by police of Sanjana Chodankar, who had been linked to the case of the death of the son of trade union leader *Who will help this girl*? (GT, Feb.1, 1990) and *Smugglers and maids*, (GT, Feb. 5, 1990).

Police atrocities against student leader Moses Fernandes did however draw editorial mention supportive of Fernandes from a section of the Press. *Freedom for goods; torture for Moses*, (GT, Aug. 31, 1991) and *Why are our cops brutal*?, (GT, Nov. 14, 1991)

As far as the anti-Konkan Railway protests go, the brutal lathi charges against the protestors drew editorial condemnation *Unnecessary brutality* (GT, Feb. 22, 1993) from a newspaper which often was editorially supportive of the railway realignment demand.

## Dalit Temple-Entry

In July 1963 *Hindu temples and Harijans*, (NT, July 9, 1963), the reader of Goa's only English-language daily of the time got a belated reference to the Dalit temple-entry issue. But this only came up when an editorial sought to explain why the daily was, uptil then, largely silent on the issue.

This explanation was prompted by a query from a reader who demanded to know why the paper was "indifferent to the question of temple entry for Harijans in Goa". In reply, the paper argued that not many contributory articles were received on this issue, but pointed out that one received was, in fact, published.

Interestingly, this particular article apparently sought to justify the lack of temple-entry to Dalits—by arguing that "most Hindu temples in Goa were private". The editorial went on to quote this article elaborately. But, finally, it said that the paper itself favoured "the entry of Harijans or any human beings" to any temple. No temple, concluded the edit, could be treated like a 'private' house.

Yet, within a week of this edit, another *Harijans & Hindu temples*, (NT, July 14, 1963) warned against any "hurry to lead morchas" demanding temple-entry. At this point of the debate, edit columns came up with the argument that "the socio-economic uplift of Harijans is of far greater importance" than temple-entry alone.

One can say here that such contortions only underline the fact that what is left unsaid by the newspapers is as important—if not more important—than what is said.

## Anti-Deputationist Protests

In 1966, anti-deputationist protest rose in Goa. Immediately after the end of colonial rule, a number of bureaucrats and petty officials had been brought in from neighbouring states to help build the local administration. After a while, the feeling arose that these bureaucrats were no longer required. Citizens agitating in favour of a 'local' bureaucracy were given grudging support. On the one hand, they were told that there is "nothing wrong in the aspirations of the people of states to have their own people to man their administration". But, nonetheless, the Opposition-led protests were strongly faulted on a number of grounds. Protesters were editorially advised that it is "un-Goan to abuse others". Similarly, their charge that deputationists were corrupt or incompetent was termed "unfair". Likewise, the choice of slogans of the anti-deputationist protests was questioned *The agitation*, (NT, June 11, 1966). Days later *Irresponsible*, (NT, June 16, 1966), the protestors were termed "irresponsible" for organising a demonstration before a visiting Union Minister on the deputationist issue.

Ironically, five years later the same daily raised the same questions as the protestors had in an editorial titled "Do we still need them?" (NT, March 31, 1971). The paper suggested that it is "not flattering" to have head clerks and junior police officers on deputation to man the Goa administration. Besides, it questioned the need for absorbing deputationists in the local government since, as the edit pointed out, they already held secure jobs in their home states.

## Protest over Hippies

In the late '60s, the sudden influx of a large number of hippies prompted both attention and concern. Goa's only existing English-language daily of the time initially took a strong editorial stand against the problems caused. In January 1970, women of the beach front of Calangute took out a protest march, calling on the government to halt nudism by the hippies in their village.

Editorial support was given to the protesting women. It was pointed out that the sarpanch of Calangute had sent a memorandum to Panjim. Housewives had staged a demonstration in the capital

town too. "Yet nothing appears to be done by those whose duty it is to act. Why?" asked the editorial *Enough is Enough.* (NT, Jan.22, 1970).

Over the next few years, a series of editorials were written, criticising the "hippy menace", decrying the hippy "invasion" and lashing out against their nudism, narcotics abuse taking and hazardous driving while under the influence of drugs. Sounding a note of caution, one editorial warned that only "if preventive steps are taken before the evil gets out of hand, we can save our youth". *The 'pot' brigade*, (NT, Oct.21, 1971). Hippies were also contemptuously labelled the "unwashed brigade" in 1974, and it was suggested that nudist should be physically removed. "Before Goa's beaches acquire notoriety, the government must act," said an editorial *The unwashed brigade*, (NT, May 4, 1974).

But, sometime in late 1975, the editorial perception of the same daily underwent a drastic change. It was pointed out that the deputy managing director of Air-India, one N.H. Dastur, had said that the hippy influx had "helped a lot" in putting "this tiny territory on the tourist map of the world". In view of this, the hippies were now being called Goa's "most 'luring' tourist lore". *Sun, fun and hippies*,( NT, Dec.20, 1975).

Even more surprising was the stand taken on what the government should do regarding the hippies. Said the same edit: "Despite the storm that the hippies kicked up by going about nude on our beaches, still whimpering in many a puritan mind, in view of the overall *economic development of (Goa) the hippies should be considered a necessary evil...After all, preserving the morality of the people is not the job of a government in a democracy...and it is more important that the people eat than improve their morals...*" (Emphasis added).

Thus was the transformation of views complete.

Other edits like *Choosing tourists?* (NT, Nov. 7, 1978) also followed a similar line of argument, in pointing out that the "naked hippies" have become one of Goa's "tourist attractions" for Indian tourists who came to see them. Sometimes subsequent criticism centered around the drug taking habits of hippies and their being a "traffic menace". But editorials seem to have turned less stringent and more infrequent on this subject.

In February 1978, another editorial argued for tolerating the same hippies earlier strongly denounced. It said: "Whether we like it or not, the 'unwashed brigade' has become one of Goa's major tourist attractions; tourists are now anxious more to see the nude hip-

pies on the beaches than enjoy our beautiful still clean beaches...As long as they remain—nude or otherwise—away from public places, there should be no objection though our laws forbid 'indecent exposure in public places'." *The Goa connection'*, (NT, Feb.1, 1978).

## Zuari Agro Chemicals' Pollution

In mid-1973, editorials *The silly season*, (NT, June 5, 1973) already began to talk about "anti-pollutionists...who are busy wrecking the job opportunities of thousands of Goans". This talk came up just at the time when Goa was poised to face its most serious pollution problem caused by a giant multinational-linked fertilizer factory. Four months later *Conservation*, (NT, Oct.9, 1973), the same paper began to concede that "the dead fish at Velsao opened eyes of many people in this territory to thee danger of pollution". But editorial doubts persisted about whether this was caused by effluents from the still-unnamed fertilizer factory or due to "upwelling".

Once again that same month *Arsenic or 'upwelling'*, (NT, Oct.20, 1973), fish mortality was again observed in Velsao. This time, the warning was against the people's tendency to "believe all sorts of rumours, often fictitious and generally exaggerated". An editorial castigated "interested parties" who were seen to be "whipping up propaganda that arsenic from the Sancoale fertilizer plant's effluent is causing fish mortality".

By March the next year, however, condemnation became stronger *Goa's 'contaminated' boom*, (NT, March 21, 1974). By this time, it was found out that the fears "appear to be real...despite repeated denials by the management of the factory, it was proved that arsenic did contaminate the sea". Later *Pollution problem*, (NT, Sept.10, 1974), the same editorial columns were calling for laws to control pollution. Prompt government action was demanded, warning otherwise that the problem would assume dangerous proportions. Once again *Continuous menace*, (NT, Oct.11, 1974), the Zuari fertilizer factory continuing to pollute was noted with concern.

One later edit *The problem persists*, (NT, Feb.22, 1975) again highlighted the issue but, strangely, raised the argument that the problem of pollution should not be made into an "emotional issue". Some edits later, the problem took a new turn when the state government gave an "ultimatum" to the company, warning Zuari Agro Chemicals Limited that it would have to close the plant. This was welcomed in the editorial column *A necessary step*, (NT, March 31, 1975). Ironically, even before this, the company already itself had made an offer to effect changes in the plant to control its pollution

during its annual May shut down *Anti-pollution: ZAC agrees to effect change*, (NT, Feb.13, 1975, Page 1).

By June 1975 *What is the guarantee...?* (NT, June 19, 1975) a stronger stand was taken, castigating the "urgency" shown in reopening the Zuari Agro Chemicals factory even before foolproof anti-pollution measures were taken. "This is no longer a political or emotional problem; it is a human problem," the editorial finally conceded.

All through these many twists, Goa's citizens had been furrowing an unsupported path of agitation, and had even staged an indefinite hunger-strike at a place near the factory, renamed 'Upasnagar' (Fast Town). Once again, the media had failed Goa in understanding a problem on time and speedily.

## Fishermen's (Ramponkars') Movement

From October 1975 onwards one finds editorial mention of what was to become the widely-noticed Goa Ramponkars' movement—a long drawn battle of traditional fishermen to fight off the destructive mechanised fishing being promoted by the government which threatened the livelihood of a significant section of Goan society. But, the problem was first dismissed off as "needless controversy" *Needless controversy*, (NT, Oct.24, 1975). The ramponkars' important role among Goan fishermen was conceded, as was the fact that they provided the bulk of fish supplies to local markets. Yet, at the same time, the arguments raised did little to help understand the issue at stake. It was editorially claimed that "the potential of marine wealth in and around Goa is so vast that, for its fuller exploitation, mechanisation is an absolute necessity..."

Later, some support was given to the ramponkars' protests. But, certain additional 'points' raised tended to confuse the issue. For instance, it was argued that the state government was helpless to implement certain demands made by the ramponkars. Similarly, the agitation was criticised for having got converted into a "political battle". The movement was also accused of having become a "communal problem", in February 1978.

Ramponkar leaders were dissuaded from attempting to court arrest, stage dharnas on highways or from "disrupting" Legislative Assembly proceedings. Plans to call off a seven and half month long protest in May 1978 were welcomed as a "wise decision". On the other hand, protests which turned violent were promptly castigated, early the next year as an "ugly development". Said an edit *Ugly development*, (NT, Feb.20, 1979): "The argument that their patience was

at an end is, to say the least, absurd; if all people who have failed to get justice decide to take such action there will be violence and bloodshed all over the country..."

Now, the issue was turned onto its head. No longer was it a question of ramponkars' surviving; instead, as the issue was framed in editorial columns, "the ramponkars cannot survive if the trawlers fish within the five-fathom limit; but *trawler-owners also have to survive*" (emphasis added). The protests dragged on into the eighties, even as the obfuscation of the issue perhaps only helped to compound it further.

## Protests over tourism

One of Goa's activist groups which has often been in the limelight in recent years has been the Jagrut Goenkarachi Fauz (JGF) which has been highlighting tourism-related concerns. It has organised several protests of varied types, and has drawn attention of the local, national and even international media. But, in Goa, the JGF (formed in 1987) has had to face largely antagonistic editorial columns. For much of the time, influential segments of the Goan media have been treating this group with palpable hostility. Press response has been far from appreciative of this activist group which has been raising a number of questions about international, luxury and other forms of tourism.

Soon after its formation, the JGF was charged with campaigning on "an insidious sort of jingoism". It was editorially suggested *Talking of morals*, (GT Feb.16, 1988), that attacking tourism was a reflex action of envy on seeing "the foreigner enjoying himself in our land". Two months later *Dirty minds*, (GT, April 4, 1988), the JGF was told that its "shadow-boxing against tourism makes no sense". It was, instead, advised to train its guns "against those who are bent on raising mini concrete jungles in Panaji".

When this group, along with others, led a march against draconian AIDS detention laws, it was chided for having done nothing to help the Goa Cancer Society when it needed cobalt stocks, *Dangerous talk*, (GT, March 31, 1989)! One year later *Let us have a sensible debate on tourism*, (GT, March 5, 1990), the group was told that it was time to "stop crying wolf". In March of 1990 *Don't harass the tourists*, (GT, March 15, 1990), an editorial uncritically repeated the London-based *Sunday Times* description of the JGF as a "fanatic Catholic organisation that hates all foreigners..." When Carnival was opposed, the JGF was chided for having "done precious little to take

the lead in giving a thrust to the non-commercial parade" *Time for policy on Carnival*, (GT, Feb. 24, 1992).

Ironically, even while this English-language local daily went on to lambast the JGF on a number of fronts, it thought fit to raise a number of serious concerns about tourism which the JGF itself was also doing!

Some of the tourism-related issues raised about the same time it lashed out at the JGF included: plans to start casinos in Goa *Just what we don't need*, (GT, May 17, 1991), *Silence speaks louder than words*, (GT, May 21, 1991); relaxing coastal building rules *The greying of the green minister*, (GT, June 7, 1991); the narcotics menace *Fighting drugs is your duty too*, (GT, June 26, 1991); excessive five-star tourism *Wanted: The right kind of hotels*, (GT, Sept.18, 1991); the possibility of tourism spreading AIDS *Comprehensive action on AIDS needed*, (GT, Oct.9, 1991); dirty beaches *Operation clean-up*, (GT, Nov. 29, 1991), plans to open up Indian beaches to foreign-owned five-star resorts *A recipe for disaster*, (GT, Jan.14, 1992); the official lackadaisical stand over the spread of AIDS *Much ado about AIDS*? (GT, Feb.29, 1992); moves for the privatisation of the beaches *No privatisation here*! (GT, April 11, 1992); denial of water to local people while five-star hotels got uninterrupted supply *There's water, water everywhere, but...*, (GT, June 26, 1992); JGF itself had raised and campaigned on a number of these issues.

## Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant

In November 1988, there already were rumblings over the safety of the proposed Kaiga nuclear power plant, and its possible adverse impact on Goa. An editorial writer *Turmoil in Karwar*, (GT, Nov.4, 1988) was rather dismissive of the protests. This edit said it did "not believe at this stage" talk of the possibility of a mishap at the nuke plant affecting Goa.

Hardly eight months later, the editorial columns in the very same section of the Press *Confrontation over Kaiga*, (GT, July 17, 1989) pointed to the stopping of nuclear plants in the West, questioned the economic viability of nuclear energy, and backed the call for a public referendum on Kaiga! This was after the formation of the 'Stop Kaiga Movement' in Goa, which incidentally had the participation of many professionals, industrialists, editors, newspapers owners and others.

At times, 'who' writes the editorial is possibly an important factor in determining the stand taken. But, at the same time, one could

also argue, that 'who' raises the protests could have been crucial in determining the Press stand towards it.

## Xendrem Anti-Manu Shah Project Protests

Among the many protests against tourism in post-Liberation Goa, this is one case which stands out prominently. All efforts to force through a hotel-health resort mega-project proved unsuccessful in the face of sustained protests by villagers of Canacona taluka. Not only this, a later enquiry into the whole affair vindicated the villagers' stands and lifted the lid off this sordid affair. But, editorial writers were far from convinced—at least in the early stages of protest.

In one of the early edits on the issue *Xendrem conundrum*, (GT, June 8, 1988), JGF was blasted for "only trying to fish in the troubled waters". For, as the editorial saw it, the "real problem" at Xendrem was over whether the promoters of the project should provide an access road (for villagers going to the beach) on the "left side of the project instead of the right side". It cursorily touched on the manner in which the village sarpanch was sacked due to a row over the project.

In the very next month, however, the editorial writer was forced to concede that the people were protesting over a very real problem *Xendrem shindy*, (GT, July 25, 1988). He now conceded that there were very real questions over the manner in which loans and subsidies had been granted for the project, and the area of land claimed by the promoters as their own. Only in the next year, after a substantial lapse of time and the surfacing of a shocking official report, it was editorially conceded *The great exposure*, (GT, April 15, 1989) that many things were indeed wrong about the project that had already drawn popular protests. For instance: an over-zealous state government official had transferred 1,50,000 sq.m. of comunidade lands to the hotel promoters; queries had been raised by the Navy over the project; and the Land Survey Department had become party to the shady deal. "The villains of the show have been exposed," it was declared. Once again, *Requiem*, (GT, Oct.7, 1989), the paper stressed its conviction that the project "as it stands must be scrapped". This time, it commented: "The issue is not merely of people's access to the beach." The world had, indeed, turned a full circle.

## Medium of Instruction Protests

In 1990, many citizens took to the streets over what, in effect, was a decision to make English-language primary education inaccessible to all those who could not pay steep fees. This decision was, on the face of it, taken in the name of encouraging primary education in the 'mother tongue'. But to understand its implications, one has to note the role played by English education in Goa prior to the decision, not just at the primary level, but at the middle school, secondary and college levels. For, prior to implementing this decision, as many as two out of every five primary school-going children in Goa were studying in English-medium schools. Expectedly, this new policy of the government raised strong protests, which later drew political support from the then-in-Opposition Congress(I).

On this issue, it would seem, that the newspapers were polarised—depending on their perceived readership base. Language again thus was used, deliberately or otherwise, to further a divide which was reminiscent of the earlier (1986-87) communal polarisation in Goa.

One daily did an about-turn on its pro-mother tongue stance mid-way on this issue, provoking some citizens to mail out copies of photo-copied editorials, showing how the stands had been switched. Between February 1990 and December 1990, another English-language daily alone wrote as many as forty editorials backing its 'pro-regional language' stance. Nine more editorials were written, with an unchanging perspective, in the following years. Using varied arguments, and raising diverse points, these editorials sought to drive home the basic point, despite the long-drawn and largely-attended protests over demands for a 'choice' of medium of instruction at the primary level by citizens.

Some of the headlines of these editorials are indicative of the various arguments used to dissuade the protestors. Among these, for instance are:

In 1990...

*Not communalism or culture: A question of identity*, GT, Feb.21.

*A question of class, not minority*, GT, Feb.24.

*Education policy will benefit Konkani*, GT, May 29.

*English at the cost of Konkani*, GT, May 30.

*What, exactly, does the Congress want*? GT, June 8.

*Crocodile tears for Konkani*, GT, June 9. *Before you march...*GT, June 11.

*Pastoral Council shows the way*, GT, June 12.
*An honourable compromise, for Konkani's sake*, GT, June 26.
*English mogis and the new education policy*, GT July 7.
*The danger of demanding English*, GT, July 9.
*Konkaniwadis it's time to quit Congress*, GT, July 12.
*Act now, regret later*, GT, July 13.
*Why is Shashikala silent*? GT, July 16.
*Agitationists or just plain looters*, GT, July 17.
*Why come on the streets*? GT, July 20.
*How to hijack an agitation*, GT, July 20.
*Half-truths, untruths and outright lies*, GT, July 23.
*Resurrect the KPA, defend Konkani*, GT, July 24.
*Church to change its stand*? GT, July 27.
*ACMI knows they are playing with fire*, GT Aug.15.
*Postpone the hunger strike until Chowath is over*, GT, Aug.18.
*Not that they love Konkani less*, GT, Sept. 13.
*A historic decision by the Church*, GT, Dec. 19.
*Hands off, John*, GT, Dec.27.
*They know not what they do*, GT, Dec.29.

In 1991...
*The Englishmen strike again*, GT, June 25.
*Konkani, now or never* GT, June 27.
*Stomach-tongue cannot replace mother-tongue*, GT, July 2.
*'Statutory' rights and medium of instruction*, GT, July 4.

## Women

Women seem to be one section of Goan society who are conspicuously missing from editorial concerns. In recent years, some quarters have been somewhat supportive of women's issues. But, editorials which make a consistent effort to raise wider, broad women's problems are conspicuous by their absence.

In some editorial columns, concern was raised over particular problems. Rapes and such incidents drew condemnation, specially if they were of a particularly ghastly kind. Demands for a women's cell in the police—to tackle growing crimes against women—drew consistent support from the *Gomantak Times*. But wider issues were

largely ignored, even as women activists in the state grew increasingly active since the late eighties and have placed on the agenda a number of their and society's concerns.

## Tourism Master Plan Protests

Perhaps it was the protests in mid-1987 against the government-sponsored 'Master Plan' which marks the watershed of tourism-related protest in Goa. Its critics charged that the Master Plan was seeking to swamp Goa with luxury tourism and in a flood tide that could subsume the interests of the larger society in the state.

For many years earlier, the government had been well disposed to promoting and justifying large-scale expansion of tourism, despite the many concerns raised by citizens over its impact. But, protests against the Master Plan—activists stormed the meet organised to discuss the proposal and staged a noisy sit-in—brought this issue to the front line. Following the incidents, protests against the unprecedented expansion of tourism in Goa took on an organised form. Since then, the same have attracted attention both within and outside the country.

Not coincidentally perhaps, the editorials we come across take a strongly anti-protest line. Despite criticising most savagely the numerous problems caused by tourism, the stand taken by the *Herald* was to castigate those citizens who had raised the protests against the Master Plan.

One edit *Abusing freedom*, (H, June 10, 1987) claimed the paper had the "deepest sympathy for the feelings and sentiments of those who oppose" the Master Plan. But, the same edit, using a number of arguments, strongly chided the protestors. It claimed that they were "not refused to be heard" by those seeking to hastily pass the Master Plan. It also argued that the "ends do not justify the means". Similarly, it charged the protestors with wrongly denying the others their "right to speak". Similarly, it advised that the protestors could have organised a seminar of their own!

Perhaps needless to point out, such a stand clearly threw its weight against protest. It failed to examine the aims of the protest, and what led to it in the first place. By arguing that the protestors could organise a counter-seminar, it simplistically reduced the job of protest to organising seminars.

Oddly, while strongly castigating the protestors, the editorial writer claimed to be "as agitated, as agonised" as the protestors.

Similarly, he stressed disagreement with "every word and ev-

ery letter and every comma in the Master Plan", despite admitting to not having read the same! What is even more surprising is that earlier this very section of the Press had raised a number of similar issues as did the group of protestors.

Significantly, other newspapers have been strongly urging the union territory/state government to speedily boost tourism in Goa—right from the sixties. Newspaper editorials in the sixties and seventies repeatedly cajole the Goa government to go in for a more intense promotion of tourism.

## Carnival

Carnival—till the mid-sixties, a largely rural, simple popular festival—was changed into a government-affair, aimed at attracting tourists. This has drawn protests from a significant section of Goans, in particular, from the Catholics who were also the main celebrants of this festival.

From 1977, editorial criticism against the Carnival surfaced in the English-language media. For instance, it was editorially conceded *On a 'subdued note'?*, (NT, Feb 16, 1977) that: "In recent years the once spontaneous and simple carnival celebrations have been officially converted into a tourist-trapping business; in the process they have not only lost their simple spontaneity but also have become a clumsy business...Let Carnival remain as it was, official attempts in such affairs often make them not only artificial but unbearingly boring."

Letters critical of the officially-backed, commercialised Carnival parade appeared in local newspapers as early as in February 1976. One Thomas D'Souza from Margao called on the government not to join in the "tamasha" (NT, Feb 23, 1976). There were also some views expressing support for this form of the Carnival, introduced sometime in the '60s.

Newspapers, at times, voiced some criticism against the Carnival. But as the time came closer to the parade, the earlier criticism—even if harsh—was quickly forgotten, and varied arguments were used to support the commercialised parade.

Soon after its launch, Goa's second-largest English-language daily wrote a spate of editorials about tourism-related and Carnival problems. One edit (*The tourist menace*, H, Jan 6, 1984) decried moves to "prostitute Goa till it is left totally stripped of its traditions and distinctive characteristics and left an empty, lifeless puppet with a five-star smile". Carnival and its floats procession, thundered an-

other editorial *Carnival blues*, (H, March 8, 1984), "tends only to confirm the unwanted belief that Goa is a land of alcoholism and promiscuity". The Carnival in its present form does not appear to serve any worthwhile purpose, it added. One later edit the next year *Stray thoughts*, (H, Jan.20, 1985) went on to say that the previous year's Carnival floats parade "comprised eighty per cent of liquor, ten per cent of football and another ten per cent of sheer vulgarity...Perhaps the Carnival Committee believes it must pander to the tourist image of Goa as the ultimate Sin City".

Yet, in spite of these expressed views, the same section of the Press went on to give the Carnival not very subtle and sophisticated support all along. In one edit *Viva Carnival*, (H, Jan.30, 1985) it argued that "every citizen of Goa...has a responsibility to revive the real spirit of Goa". Soon after, *Carnival and sin*, (H, Feb.7, 1985) it countered its own stance of just a few weeks earlier. It criticised the Catholic Church for its stand against the commercialised Carnival parade, and asked whether dances do not "follow every wedding in the Union Territory of Goa". It argued that "Catholics and Catholic families and Catholic businessmen benefit from the tourism traffic that comes for the Carnival".

It even went on to warn the Church of the 'dangers' in taking a stand critical of the commercialised parade *Church and Carnival*, (H, Feb.13, 1985). "For the Church to take an uncompromising position of antagonism to the Carnival would be imprudent. It will unnecessarily provoke a direct confrontation between the Church and State," it went on to argue.

In 1986, the editorial columns *Carnival cancelled*, (H, Jan.31, 1986) welcomed the cancellation of the Carnival with the view that "good sense has finally prevailed". This was at the height of the pro-Konkani language agitation, which was supported by the newspaper in question. But again, the following year, the same columns editorially blasted the protestors who were campaigning against the commercial floats parade for Carnival. In a front-paged signed editorial, the editor *Enough is enough*, (H, Feb.28, 1987) called the protests a "campaign of terror and intimidation". It went on to argue that "we cannot allow a small group of fanatics to hold the whole of Goa to ransom".

Earlier, a distinction was drawn between 'Carnival' and 'Carnival'—projecting the former as bad and the latter as good. Even though traditional festivities used to be called 'Carnival', ironically what was now sought to be promoted under this name was the very same, commercialised town-based floats parade aimed at drawing

tourists. That the commercialised Carnival parade was promoting lewdness is a view which is supported by news reports in the newspapers themselves. (NT report on page 1, issue dated Feb.21, 1971 describing the Carnival decree of King Momo.) The parade ultimately managed to get the support of all the three main English-language dailies. '*Don't blame Carnival for your failings*', (GT, March 2, 1991) went on to suggest that should one's "moral fabric be strong, none of the immoral and perverted abuses occur, even under trying situations".

Perhaps the stands of the newspapers—which supported the floats parade at critical points of time—give a hint of the influence of the liquor, entertainment and tourism lobbies in this state. That some newspapers are closely linked to these sectors is not merely coincidental. Carnival also means many column centimetres of ads, a fact which is perhaps important. Also that the Carnival floats-organisers saw the support of the media as crucial is underlined by the fact that the 'media' was chosen as the 'theme' for the Carnival one year.

## Other Issues

On various other issues, a close study of the editorial stances of the English-language Goa Press between 1963 and 1993 also indicates that these media were largely unsupportive, critical of, or even hostile to protest.

In the case of students' protests, a general trend in the earlier years seems to have been that student 'indiscipline' should strongly discourage. So too, attempt at staging protests or attempting collective bargaining. Students of professional (thus, elitist) institutions were however treated more sympathetically. Generally, issues raised by students in the form of petitions were encouraged.

Over the years, some sections of the media have been relatively sympathetic to student protest. Some edits even came out strongly in favour of protesting students. One reason could be that quite a number of former student activists, thrown up during the late '70s and early '80s, have themselves become journalists. Students, importantly, also form a significant section of the newspapers' readers. Perhaps it is significant that except for a few cases—in which institutions run by proprietors of newspapers were directly affected—student protests have not been targetted against Press proprietorial interests.

On the issue of land reforms, repeated editorials in the '60s and '70s lobbied against 'alacrity' and 'hurry' in undertaking land reforms,

and opposed the plans drafted by the then Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party government. Some legitimate questions were raised about the type of land reforms being introduced without taking note of the impact of the same on the small landholder. But, while some genuine questions may have been raised, most early responses to this issue were strongly unsupportive. One edit, (NT, March 7, 1963), for instance, seeks to argue that rallies in favour of land reforms were unnecessary "because land reform is (a) live problem everywhere in the world and not merely in India..."

Prior and during the CHOGM Retreat (Commonwealth Heads of Government Retreat) held in Goa for an army of VVIPs in 1983, there were only few small hints in the editorial columns about citizens' protests which greeted the same. Issues such as the wasteful expenditure of crores of rupees by the state, and the attempt to grab villagers' land by a hotel group found no editorial mention.

Similarly, serious issues which failed to get editorial mention include the protests staged against the first Condor charter tourist flights at the Dabolim airport, the determined attempts by women's activists to fight against sex-discrimination tests (meant to selectively abort female foetuses), and the prolonged agitation by tenants against the Seema Hotel plan at Agonda, Canacona.

One other shocking case which leaves behind many questions is that of the anti-migrant riots which broke out in Vasco da Gama in late 1982. In fact, newspaper editorials were carried repeatedly criticising the increasing number of slums in Goa—thus blaming the poor migrants, rather than looking at the reasons behind what caused the slums. This could have even aggravated anti-migrant sentiment, in a way that the poor suffered the most.

On the issue of the environment, the response of the media seemed to depend on what issue was being taken up. Issues like the declining forest cover of Goa drew editorial mention a number of times. Issues which directly touched newspaper proprietors' business interests, like mining, were rarely touched upon. On the contrary, some editorials took on the task of deflecting criticism of this sector. One early editorial *Bund committee works*, (NT, Aug.23, 1963) however stands out as an exception. It openly and honestly acknowledged the role of mining barges in damaging 'bunds' along the rivers. After Chipko leader Sunderlal Bahuguna visited Goa, however, *The Navhind Times* castigated him for criticism of mining pollution in Goa, through a number of subtle and not-so-subtle arguments. This media response to environmentalism was noted in Goa's first statewide report on green issues.[5]

On the question of the Free Port, one single newspaper wrote editorials supportive of the idea in January 1991, opposing it in July 1991, then again supporting it in December 1991 and January 1992. On the Konkan Railway alignment, one newspaper is known to have changed stands repeatedly in terms of support given to objectors. Another paper supported the protests editorially, but its reports seemed to be not favourably inclined to the demand for a change in the route.

## Unreliable Watchdogs, Stifled Opinion

In Goa, the daily newspapers' editorial stances on various protest movements would tend to reveal a largely unfriendly attitude towards such actions. It is not perhaps coincidental that individuals and groups involved in protest issues in Goa have often felt that they have received an unfair deal from the media.

In the recent Konkan Railway realignment movement, the protestors were openly critical of the functioning of large sections of the Press. Some quarters also thought it fit, interestingly, to issue signed letters aimed at various sections of the Press, in an attempt to censure its functioning. Talk could be heard about ways of building up alternatives to the existing Press. Earlier, following the anti-Zuari Agro Chemicals pollution protests and the ramponkars' protest movement, some citizens and activists even undertook the venture of collecting funds and launching a daily Konkani newspaper, which unfortunately collapsed after a few years of publication.

Newspapers pride themselves on their role as watchdogs of injustice, abuse and corruption. However, research at the international level tends to point to the media being rather less than effective in this capacity: generally following rather than leading in the investigations of abuse and tending to be guilty of omission as much as commission. Obviously 'watchdoggery' is hampered by a lack of media independence—from advertising revenue, from the influence of capital or institutional control, and from the influence of influential segments of society or the government.

What is the likely impact of hostile (or unsupportive) media responses to public protests? One gets a hint from what has been termed as 'Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence Model of Public Opinion'.[6] A person may find that the views he holds are losing ground; the more this appears to be so, the more uncertain he will become of himself, and the less will he be inclined to express his opinion. This, briefly, is the spiral of silence.

One other useful concept is that of 'hegemony'. It owes much to the work of Italian political thinker Antonio Gramsci (1881-1937). A stage of hegemony is achieved when a provisional alliance of certain social groups exert a consensus which makes the power of the dominant groups appear both natural and legitimate.

Institutions such as the mass media, the family, the education system and religion, play a key role in the shaping of people's awareness and consciousness and thus can be agents through which hegemony is constructed, exercised and maintained.

Perhaps, using such concepts might give us a better understanding of the history of the Press' response to public protest in Goa and its consequences on decision-making.

It is an interesting subject, which throws open a whole Pandora's box of questions.

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9

# *Goa: The Politics of Environment Abuse*

**Claude Alvares***

*On a clear day, after a heavy shower, Goa sparkles with the freshness of a piece of newly chipped wood. Nature evolved this beautiful land without the aid of artists, designers, architects or engineers, and she designed it to last forever.*

Inside Outside Magazine, 1978

In 1978, the Mumbai-based interior design magazine, *Inside Outside* published a detailed article called *Goa: Finished in Ten Years*. That article was probably the first serious attempt to provide a comprehensive view of the environmental changes that the small Goa region had begun to undergo as a result of old and new development pressures. Its scope was indeed quite ambitious (some might even say audacious) and I am not so sure whether it was even remotely successful in what it set to achieve. The editor of *Inside Outside*, Sean Mahomey, wished to present Goa's emerging environmental problems in a very graphic way with the kind of great, coloured photographs possible in an interior design magazine. As the author of the article, I tried to gauge the emerging outlines of environmental disturbance with my own limited awareness of the situation and of the actors responsible at that time.

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**Claude Alvares is Director of the Goa Foundation, Goa's environment monitoring group and editor of* Fish, Curry and Rice. *Here he provides a review of the wanton devastation of Goa's fragile ecosystems and a warning about the consequences, updating an essay 'Goa Finished in Ten Years' which first appeared in* Inside Outside *magazine in December 1978.*

Though more than 20 years have elapsed since the publication of that article, I find it useful to refer to it here for one simple reason—to examine its main concerns and match them with the concerns of the environment movement as it is poised today in the last year of the millennium. I am not interested at all in examining the earlier article for any prophetic insights or predictive powers, if any, or for what might prove even more embarrassing—finding out how far wrong it proved to be in its predictions. That is for others to judge. The article, for example, had forecast large scale negative impacts in 10 years. Today we are 20 years away. If anything, the sense of anxiety over the destruction of Goa's ecology is even more widespread than it was in 1978 and the awareness that several areas of Goa are now perhaps in irreversible environmental decline is no longer in dispute. However, I now wish to deal with the issue of what bothered us then and what bothers us now: which of the old issues have disappeared, which have remained, and which are the new ones that have taken us by the throat? That I believe would be a useful exercise. It would also provide resources for a substantial environmental history of Goa.

*Goa: Finished in Ten Years* reported the following environ-mental issues:

• The pollution caused by the Zuari Agro Chemical's giant fertiliser complex set up in 1973 at Sancoale. The article recorded the environmental havoc caused by the company which had begun to discharge untreated effluents containing arsenic into the neighbouring Cola bay. A massive agitation eventually led to the factory being closed by the District Magistrate through an order passed under section 133 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Eventually the factory had to replace its hazardous ventro-coke process with the less hazardous Benfield process.

The closure of the factory was the first major victory of the environmental movement in Goa. (Almost 20 years later, Goans in Ponda taluka would get rid of DuPont, fearing similar disaster). The movement's leaders included Matanhy Saldanha and Urban Lobo. Eventually, Saldanha assumed the leadership of the Goenchea Ramponkarancho Ekvott and infused a strong dose of ecological reasoning into that organisation's strategies as well. He later formed a political party called the Gomant Lok Pokx which is still by and large the only party to reflect serious environmental issues in its election manifesto. However, the party has never done well in any of the elections it has contested though Goans are considered environmentally conscious citizens.

• The pollution caused by the sugar factory at Usgao. Molas-

ses dumped by the factory into a nallah next to it percolated into a reservoir which was at that time supplying water to the population of Margao. (Today, Margao gets its water from the Selaulim dam reservoir in Sanguem). Citizens of the town got up one morning to find the water coming out of their taps bore an unbearable stench. The pollution upset the Goans. Emergency measures were taken and the pollution abated. However, factory officials' reactions were more amazing. They claimed that the rivers in the Maharashtra sugar belt were all polluted with such molasses and that the people there drink and bathe in such water and do not crib.

• Mining and its environmental impact. The article went into quite some detail covering the negative consequences attendant upon open cast (strip) mining and produced a detailed catalogue of the economic damage that mining was doing to the forest and paddy fields surrounding the lease areas. Also discussed was the Chowgule owned pelletisation plant at Shiroda where an agitation had emerged due to the pollution caused by the newly set up plant.

Aside from these major issues, the article also highlighted the emerging concrete jungle, comprising mostly shabby constructions, coming up in the coastal areas of Calangute and Colva.

It concluded its environmental survey by reporting the decline of traditional Goan handicraft production based on clay, glass, bamboo and lacquer. It lamented the declining use of objects of brass and the gradual incursion of plastic into everyday life including the *doodkem* used by the toddy taper for collection of toddy from the coconut trees.

The most unusual part of *Goa: Finished in Ten Years* is the final section dealing with the Town and Country Planning department. S.P. Deshpande was head of the department at that time and the article recorded an optimistic conversation with him regarding the new proposals to use the provisions of the Goa Town and Country Planning Act 1974 to deal with some of the problems that had risen in the absence of planned development.

Deshpande subsequently left the department. Today no person in his right mind would expect even an iota of benign behaviour from the department which contrary to its promise has in fact led the assault on Goa's environment through means fair and foul, mostly foul.

Of all the issues discussed in the *Inside Outside* article, only the pollution caused by the sugar factory is no longer a preoccupation in our time. This is largely because molasses are now disposed off to the liquor trade and have thus been shifted from destroying the environment to destroying people's brains.

**Engaging Environmental Issues: Official Responses**

In any given society there is a specific set of actors who play significant roles in matters relating to environment conservation. The primary group of course is the government comprising elected ministers and appointed bureaucrats and also the various statutory authorities. These are several and include the Goa State Pollution Control Board, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the Planning and Development Authorities (PDAs), the Department of Industries and Mines, the Town and Country Planning Department, the Forest Department, the municipalities and the panchayats.

This is the impressive structure of public officers and offices which impinges solidly on how environmental issues are tackled. It is mandated to ensure environment protection as per the provisions of the Constitution, the Environment Protection Act (1986), the Town and Country Planning Act (1974), the Air (1981) and Water (1974) Pollution Control Acts, etc.

Despite the number of offices and officers and Acts, the experience of the last 20 years is largely depressing: officialdom has been rarely committed to such legislation and therefore imple-mentation has been practically non-existent in several areas of concern. Often, the authorities themselves have shown they are unaware of the legislation as such. Two concrete instances immediately come to mind:

During the hearings on the writ petition filed by Prof. Sergio Carvalho against the construction of the Ramada Hotels in South Goa in 1988, the state's advocate general blandly informed the court that the state government was not aware that the Indian Parliament had enacted the Environment Protection Act in 1986.

More recently, in 1998, during hearings in the High Court involving the illegal setting up of the Teksid Kalyani Foundry in Bicholim, it became transparent that none of the authorities including the Panchayat and the IDC had heard of the Environment Impact Assessment notification issued by the Central government in January 1994 requiring prior environment clearance of certain projects including foundries. The factory was forced to stop all work at the site despite the host of approvals and permissions that it possessed from government authorities because it did not have the mandatory environment clearance.

Thus the presence of a whole gamut of environmental statutes on the state's law books does not mean a thing and this is why in several cases the courts have had to come down harshly on the Goa government for dereliction of duty.

**Town and Country Planning: Good Intentions, Bad Faith**

Many of these problems could have been better handled, or even prevented, if the Government had been sincere about implementing the provisions of the Town & Country Planning Act 1974. The Act, which came into force in 1976, is largely a copy of the Maharashtra Town & Country Planning Act. (In fact, most of our legislation is generally copied from the law books of the neighbouring state). The Act empowers government to ensure the planned development of the state without compromising natural resources.

Under the provisions of the Act, it became the responsibility of the Chief Town Planner to prepare a Regional Plan, which would provide for broad land uses throughout the state. Some of these land uses would reflect existing land uses. However, in certain other parts of the state, areas would be set aside for industrial purposes or town planning schemes. Town Planners claim that the Regional Plan they drafted was made available in all the taluka headquarters so that people could inspect it and file objections and suggestions. After this so-called public participation exercise, the Plan became law when it was notified in 1986 in the gazette. As per the Act, from the date of the Notification, no development activities may violate the land uses demarcated in the plan.

The Act also did not permit any changes to be made in the Regional Plan for a ten year period. Given the nature of the Regional Plan exercise, mistakes in zoning were bound to occur and several persons found that their settlement areas had been placed in orchard areas or their agricultural areas had been demarcated as orchard zones, etc. These, however, could have been modified without too much of a fuss by adopting suitable procedures.

However, by 1986, when the Plan was notified, a new set of economic interests had set their eyes on Goa. These were led by the tourist lobby which found that the Regional Plan had set aside all the beach areas for purposes of orchard or as green areas. Accordingly, pressures were brought to bear and an amendment hastily moved in the Assembly which empowered the government to forgo the ten year restriction and change the Plan as and when it pleased. Thus, hardly had the ink dried on the official gazette when the first set of Regional Plan changes designed to make way for the Ramada Hotel, the Leela, etc. were notified. Shortly thereafter DuPont decided to erect its Nylon 6,6 factory at Savoi-Verem and the Government agreed to allow land use changes to permit the DuPont project.

Within the short span of ten years after the regional plan was notified, Government itself was forced to concede that the plan was

modified more than a thousand times to suit either this party or that, with the result that much of the development that has come up since 1986 is actually in violation of the land uses originally statutorily notified. Government has now submitted the revision of the Regional Plan—valid till the year 2000 A.D.—to a private consultant. However, there is no guarantee that even the new Regional Plan, when notified, will not be subject to the pulls and pressures of moneyed parties who first buy land wherever they want and where it suits their purposes, confident that they can always have the Plan changed to regularize the new uses to which they intend to put the land.

Politicians have got an extremely uncanny understanding of such planning exercises and what they can be exploited for. If people are allowed to construct as per their needs, and not as per the requirements of a statutory plan, there is no possibility of income for the politicians. The moment a statutory plan like the Regional Plan is imposed over the entire state, power to allow particular land uses changes passes over to the bureaucrat and to the politician. Invariably, the persons in charge of approving the land use changes—the Chief Minister, members of the Town and Country Planning Board and officials of the Town Planning department—stand to benefit enormously and this is what has happened with the planning exercises under the Town & Country Planning Act. The Town and Country Planning Board is largely conducted as a circus, with individual members trying to get private changes accommodated and the men at the top clearing files that are not even placed before the other members. Agendas are manipulated or added as required. Politicians love such exercises in "planned development" because it brings every one to *their* knees, as supplicants. No land use is rejected provided the money is right. No reasons are given for any of the land use changes. All are arbitrarily carried out. The Board proposes the changes; the Board approves them. Objections filed by citizens against proposed changes are routinely dumped into the wastepaper basket.

The sorriest episode in the history of planned development in Goa has involved the setting up of the Planning & Development Authorities. Under the Act, the Government must first notify planning areas, and then, Planning and Development Authorities (PDAs) to prepare sound development schemes for the notified planning areas. The PDAs appointed very rapidly became another source of harassment to the local population and the manner in which business was conducted at the Planning Board described above was repeated faithfully here. The PDAs set out to prepare Outline Development Plans for the areas within their jurisdiction. However, here too corruption became rampant and very little planning was done. Eventually, the

PDAs degenerated into bodies approving individual projects and constructions, where money could be extorted, abdicating their planning function altogether.

The Chairpersonship of the PDAs became a coveted post. At one time, the Government very nearly collapsed due to a dispute over the appointment of the chairperson to the Panjim PDA. Invariably upto now politicians or their cronies have been made Chairmen of the planning authorities. Practically none of them has had any experience or interest in planning schemes or their implementation. Every time the Government is changed, the PDAs have been dismantled to get rid of the existing Chairperson and members and to accommodate a new Chairperson and members.

Every exercise in planning of this kind has followed the same dismal pattern despite the fact that the state was headed for several years by a politician who claimed to be educated at an American University. The coastal areas and the planning requirements of these areas have also been seen as another source of golden eggs. The Government set up several committees including the Eco-Development Council (assisted by an Eco-Control Committee) and then later, in the nineties, the Goa State Committee on Environment followed by the Goa State Committee on Coastal Environment (GSCCE). These bodies were packed with representatives of the builders' lobby and often by people who were themselves accused of violating coastal laws. A former Chief Secretary dismissed the GSCCE as a "builders' lobby" and he even refused to attend any of its meetings after a time.

**Forests:**

One of the features for which Goa is well loved is its remarkable natural environment reflected in the dense growth of trees. The interior belt of Goa is largely occupied by the thickly forested Western Ghats. De-forestation is not permitted here and the forest tracts have remained in vigorous state of growth. After the ghats come the plateau areas, in some sections bare, in other areas generally covered with shrub vegetation and grasses except for the slopes leading to the plains where forests have emerged over several years.

The smaller hills that appear in many villages of Bardez and Salcette are covered with good natural growth. In some stretches, the vegetative growth is mixed with plantation cashew. By and large, over 70% of the land in the coastal area is under tree cover of some kind: largely coconut, cashew, mango, bamboo, jackfruit and other local species.

Many of the green areas filled with natural vegetation are not

shown as forested areas in the statutory Regional Plan. They are zoned as 'orchard' instead. For several years now the government has wilfully permitted these so-called 'orchard' areas to be converted to settlement purposes. In 1990 the Bombay High Court passed a detailed judgement in which it directed the government to survey all the private forest areas in the state and to have the land records modified accordingly. For example, in many areas, thickly forested areas are still shown in the land records as barren (barad) lands. It was only in 1996 that the Supreme Court of India issued directions to all the state governments to constitute committees to identify private forests in their states. In Goa a committee comprised of high-ranking foresters and scientists was set up under the chairmanship of Sadanand Sawant for the purpose.

Even while the committee was doing its work, the Tatas began construction of a massive luxury housing complex on the Betim hill. Preliminary activities involved clearing of the natural vegetation and trees. The project promised to open up the entire Betim forest for purposes of large-scale development, that too for speculative purposes. Eventually, on a petition filed by the Goa Foundation, the High Court disallowed the development and directed the Tatas to remove the constructions and restore the vegetation in the area. The High Court judgement gave a serious fillip to the Sawant Committee's efforts to identify private forest areas for the purposes of enumerating such areas for reporting to the Supreme Court.

**The Decline of Goa's Beaches**

The coastal areas of Goa, particularly the beaches of North Goa upto Chapora river and Cavelossim village in the South have continued to be the focus of deadly assault since 1986 when the Goa government decided to develop and promote charter tourism in the state. As stated earlier, all these beaches were zoned as 'orchard' in the statutory Regional Plan. However, as hotel developers purchased lands along beaches, government obliged by making appropriate changes in the Regional Plan.

In the frenzy that followed to set up adequate number of hotel rooms for the invading tourists, few controls were installed. Permissions to erect buildings were granted in open violation of existing policies disallowing construction on beaches. At first Calangute, thereafter Colva, then Cavelossim and Candolim fell rapidly to become large scale concrete jungles. Today the rooms are available but the tourists have fled. The nature of the soil being extremely porous, the discharge of untreated sewage led to widespread contamination of the ground water in almost all the coastal areas by raw sewage.

(There is no organised sewage available anywhere in Goa except for small parts of Panjim and Vasco. Margao's sewage system is yet to be commissioned).

On 19.2.1991, the Environment Ministry in Delhi issued the Coastal Regulation Zone notification requiring the state government to prepare a Coastal Zone Management Plan for Goa's coastal areas within the period of a year. The Town Planning department, however, kept delaying the preparation and submission of the plan even though the state government had begun work on a plan reflecting the status of the coastal areas in 1989 itself. Delay in the preparation of the plan was for two reasons:

1. Keeping the zones vague enabled the state government to go ahead and grant several questionable permissions. CRZ III zones, for example, were treated as CRZ II zones. The state government also kept modifying the zoning classifications. Areas earlier declared as CRZ I were later shown as CRZ III simply because powerful interests had in the meanwhile purchased land for resorts in such areas.

2. The state government also wanted to keep certain areas, like Goa's tidal riverine stretches, out of the CRZ area. It argued that if development along the rivers was controlled by CRZ regulations, there would be no development permissible in 60% of the state since it was extensively covered by such tidal rivers.

Fortunately, the apex court passed a detailed judgement on all coastal zone matters on 18th April 1996. In that judgement, the court required the governments of all coastal states to prepare their coastal zone management plans and get these approved by the Environment Ministry by September 30, 1996. The Goa government reluctantly followed suit and submitted its plan. However, several portions of the plan submitted were rejected by the Central government and by an order dated 27.9.1996, the Central government imposed a more realistic classification Goa's coastal areas including provisions for protection of turtle nesting sites, mangrove areas, sand dunes and coral reef zones.

The state government, however, continued to play cat and mouse with the implementation of the approved CZMP even after it was submitted in the Supreme Court. Again it was only after a petition was filed by the Goa Foundation in the High Court that the state government gave an undertaking to the court on 15.7.1998 that it would implement the approved plan of 27.9.96.

On 26th November 1998, the Ministry of Environment constituted the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) for the state. The GCZMA will now deal with approvals of coastal projects,

and violations of CRZ notification laws. It will function from the office of the Director of Science, Technology & Environment (STE). The infamous GSCCE has been finally dissolved and all the files dealing with coastal matters have been taken away from the jurisdiction of the Chief Town Planner and his troupe in the Town & Country Planning Department—the Mother of all corrupt departments in the state—and handed over to the Director of STE.

Whether the GCZMA will also degenerate and follow the sorry record of the GSCCE, only time will tell. For the moment, it appears the beaches may have some respite from the large-scale assaults launched against them in the last decade by developers and tourist lobbies.

**Sand Dunes:**

The destruction of Goan villages like Calangute and Cavelossim through the RCC jungle syndrome is well documented. However, nothing illustrates Government apathy towards the protection of coastal ecology better than what has been allowed to happen to the sand dunes. Dunes are natural endowments and according to all scientific literature, they should not be interfered with. The Regional Plan also seeks to provide protection to them.

This is because sand dunes play an extremely important role in the defence of the land against the forces of the sea. They are created by nature and stabilised over centuries. They are identified as large mounds of wind blown sand very often kept stable by unique and specific dune vegetation. The National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)—India's premier marine institution located as Dona Paula, Goa—has generated a fairly considerable literature regarding the role of sand dunes in the ecosystem and has played a key role in their identification.

In the mid-seventies, the Goa government rather thoughtlessly granted leases to several parties to extract sand from the dunes of the Salcette coast. These sand dunes are rich in silica and were therefore in great demand for foundries, most notably in the Pune region. Piles of sand taken from sand dunes in Varca and Arossim could be found waiting shipment at Majorda railway station. The destruction of the sand dunes due to such mining generated a huge protest and led to the setting up of an Anti-Sand Extraction Committee led by Walfrido Antao and Francis Rodrigues. Eventually, the government acceded to the demands and cancelled the leases on ecological grounds. The lessees then successfully procured a stay of the cancellation orders from the High Court. It was only in 1986 on a

petition filed by the Goa Foundation that the leases were finally cancelled.

Shortly thereafter, the Goa government approved the construction of several five star hotels on the same sand dunes.

The Ramada Hotel, for example, used sand from several dunes to fill the huge plinth areas of its buildings under construction. The Ramada was to claim later that it was an environmentally conscious hotel resort and as proof proclaimed it had initiated a scheme by which every tourist staying in its hotel would contribute one US dollar towards the saving of the Amazon Rain Forest in Brazil! Dalmia constructed their condominiums squarely on the dunes and claimed its buildings were actually fortifying the dunes. Subsequently several permissions were granted to other hotels including the Leela, Averrina and Dona Sylvia to construct in sand dunes areas. Dona Sylvia, for instance, imported bulldozers to the hotel site and flattened the dunes entirely so that the area resembled a football ground.

It was only in 1991 that sand dunes finally received full legal protection under the CRZ notification. But this has not saved them altogether for the government remains uncommitted towards ensuring their conservation. Despite the evidence of unparalleled destruction due to development, the government resolutely refuses to map out the remaining sand dunes, thus effectively enabling their destruction. Dunes can be removed overnight by a bulldozer. Even at the time of writing, despite statutory protection, the destruction of sand dunes has continued in areas like Calangute and Varca and the Nagorcem beach at Palolem.

Moreover, rather unfortunately, the CRZ notification protects dunes only upto 500 metres from the HTL. There is no protection for dunes beyond 500 metres of the HTL. However, sand dunes within 500 metres are affected if dunes beyond 500 metres are removed. In Cavelossim, dunes beyond 500 metres have all been removed or destroyed in a frenzy of construction activity that has turned the area almost into a replica of Vasai-Virar in Mumbai.

Every scientist concedes that the removal of dunes from coastal areas is ecologically absurd and economically senseless. Sand dunes provide natural and cost-free protection to the land from the sea's perennial forces. They are all the more essential in coastal areas subject to the phenomenon of Sea Level Rise. On several beaches all over the country, expensive measures have had to be adopted to prevent sea ingress, especially where sand dunes have been removed. The developer's greed is the problem. But as a Bombay High Court judge

said recently: "These geomorphic edifices have to be preserved at all costs. Sand dunes...cannot be permitted to be bulldozed with money power."

**Turtles:**

In this depressing scenario, one positive development needs to be highlighted: the turtle conservation programme at Morgim beach in North Goa initiated by the Goa Foundation three years ago. The programme has now been taken over by the wildlife division of the forest department which has the resources—and also the commitment—to keep the programme going. Its most interesting feature is that it is based on the cooperation of the youth of Morgim village.

The Ministry of Environment has zoned Morgim and Mandrem beaches as turtle nesting sites under the approved CZMP and granted them category I status, with no-development zone upto 500 metres from the HTL.

Last year (1997-98) for the first time in several decades, more than 400 turtles hatched at Morjim and found their way to the sea. A similar number of turtles are expected to hatch in the 1998-99 season. The Forest Department has decided to set up a turtle hatchery on the beach. Yet marine turtles continue to be killed in other parts of Goa. Three turtles were reported slaughtered at Benaulim and another two at Galgibag beach during the 1998-99 season. Turtles are worshipped among some of the Hindu communities. So some measure of protection ought to be ensured. Unfortunately, there is a small section of the population which believes turtle eggs are best poached and turtles better off eaten than alive.

**Konkan Railway:**

In 1990, Goans were informed that the Central Government had taken a decision to construct a railway line connecting Mangalore and Mumbai through a coastal route which would cut through Goa, north to south. The railway project eventually came to be called the Konkan railway. However, once the alignment was announced, it led to a large agitation for diversion of a portion of the proposed alignment in the southern part of the state.

The statutory Regional Plan of Goa had aligned the railway route through the middle section of Goa (north to south) with the line in fact passing through Ponda taluka. This was done on the grounds that the coastal area was already showing signs of overdevelopment and it was necessary to shift development activities into the middle

and interior belts. Railways attract development: hence it was argued locating the railway line in the interior would help spread development effects in an area long starved of any development activity. People would be benefitted.

The railways however had their own plans. In Goa they saw their best income coming from the developed coast. As the railway was being constructed through money raised through bonds, its promoters wished to earn money right away so that interest on bonds could be paid. Therefore, running the track through poorer regions was out. In addition, the railways seemed unable to deal with the mining lobby in Goa which feared an alignment in the mining belt would cut through mining roads and provide a permanent source of obstruction and delays. The result was the selection of a route that would go through Mapusa and Panaji.

Eventually, even this was changed. The final alignment would enter Goa from the North at Pernem and then proceed to Old Goa from where it would move coastwards, move along a parallel Zuari bridge, then proceed through the populated areas of Salcette before moving out through Cancona. The moment this alignment was made known, it was fervently opposed. The government had to make repeated efforts at setting up committees to examine the objections being presented by the population.

The railways first appointed a committee headed by Manual Menezes. The Ministry of Environment next appointed a committee headed by Kamla Choudhury and finally the Prime Minister had to stop work on the disputed sector in Goa and send a former Supreme Court judge, G.N. Oza to go into the question of whether the route had been properly selected or not, and whether it should indeed be changed. None of these committees did their work with any measure of objectivity, fairness or competence. Even the High Court summarily dismissed a petition against the project, reiterating a long enforced judicial tradition that large projects will not be stalled by writs.

Ultimately—due to the controversies generated by the realignment agitation—the cost of the railway escalated making it economically unviable and plunging it into serious debt. In Goa, as predicted by the agitators, embankments kept sinking in Khazan areas. By the time the trains began to run, large areas of paddy cultivation were destroyed as the mammoth embankments choked all traditional systems of water circulation in those areas.

Apart from the eco-system damage, the necessity for large embankments led to the virtual destruction of more than 20 hills which

even today lie scoured without vegetation and without any measures for stabilisation of the parts that were left behind.

The true ecological impact of the Konkan Railway project is only now being discovered and documented. Because of the High Court ruling, the Environment Ministry went to the extent of keeping all railway projects outside the purview of mandatory public hearings and environment impact assessment as required under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986. Today the railways are arrogant enough to claim that they may do as much damage as they please as the courts have held them virtually unaccountable. The right of a railway corporation to lay a line apparently carries greater weight than Article 21 of the Constitution.

**Industrial Pollution:**

S.P. Deshpande is reported in *Inside Outside* as saying that polluting industries would be located in specific places so that the poison from them could be effectively managed. The experience with Zuari Agro Chemicals, however, changed public opinion in Goa wholly against having any polluting industries in the state. Ministers for Industry faithfully echoed public sentiment, saying loud and clear that polluting industries would not be allowed to be licensed in the state.

It is not only the major pollution events of 1973-74 associated with Zuari Agro that turned public opinion against such plants. The main difficulty thereafter has been the monitoring and control of effluents from existing plants including Zuari Agro Chemicals (now Zuari Industries).

After the change over of its process from ventro-coke to Benfield, Zuari Industries also introduced a full scale effluent treatment plant and was permitted to discharge its treated effluent at a specific point into the sea. However, the company continued its practice of clandestine discharge of effluents and plant washings into the Poim creek on an annual basis in violation of all laws. The company now claims that it has by several process modifications reached a stage of zero effluent generation and is therefore now no longer discharging any effluents into the open sea. According to information supplied by the company, the treated effluent water is re-used and sent to the DAP plant where it is mixed with the fertiliser which is sold to farmers. Whether the farmers are aware of the company's efforts to involve them in the final dispersal of its liquid effluent is not known.

Air pollution from the factory has continued with impunity for

over 25 years simply because the standards for ammonia in ambient air were not notified by either the Central Pollution Control Board or the State Board. It was only after a writ petition was filed by the Goa Foundation and a direction issued by the High Court that the Central government issued a notification containing the standards.

In the meanwhile, Zuari Industries has been put under permanent monitoring of the High Court.

**DuPont's Nylon 6,6**

After their experience of the nightmarish arsenic pollution caused by Zuari Agro Chemicals, the Goans became quite wary of large factories coming up in their neighbourhood. Another major confrontation began to emerge in the late '80s when people in Goa first heard of the proposed Nylon 6,6 project coming up in the state.

The project to be put up by DuPont—America's largest chemical corporation—was proposed to be located on a plateau surrounded by five villages including the villages of Keri and Savoi-Verem. The company succeeded in roping in an Indian partner, Ballarpur Industries, owned by the Thapars, and the EDC for the project. The EDC was associated with the project in order to assist the corporation to gain all the necessary government approvals particularly those relating to the acquisition of land. Later, with the land in its possession, the corporation would seek to edge EDC fully out of the deal.

The rising protest generated by fears about the plant (a unit originally installed in 1938 in pre-World War II Richmond, USA) led to the formation of a House Committee headed by Babu Naik. This was after the Chief Town Planner had decided the proposed location was hazardous for the future of the environment surrounding the site, especially its feared impact on the sweet water springs on which villages below depended. His opinion was flatly rejected by then Chief Minister Pratap Singh Rane.

The House Committee's report however indicted the plant and recommended it be shelved.

The classic conflict between the company's designs for the Ponda area and its own circumstances in the U.S. is sharply brought out in the wise words of the House Committee report:

> "The self-sustaining, self-governing village communities of Goa—(the Communidades) are part of Goa's cultural ecology. Through mass labour over the years, the Goan settlers have topo-engineered the land for orchards, bamboo-groves, cashew plantations etc. Bandharas or mini-dams were built

for irrigation. Springs and fountains were protected and conserved. Stone-fencing was done on hill-slopes to curtail soil erosion. Plateaus having yet unexplored grassland flora were reserved as traditional grazing areas. Holy trees were carefully nurtured and protected.

"The arguments of Thapar DuPont (TDL) have been based upon their experience of their Richmond plant in U.S.A. But Goa is not Richmond and the James river where DuPont releases its treated waste water cannot be compared to lifeline rivers of Goa i.e. Mandovi and Zuari.

"The question of importing technology is not just related to its state-of-the-art nature, but also to its magnitude and compatibility if we consider the unique cultural ecology of various regions of India. Goa has such an unique cultural ecology. Richmond, U.S.A., has an industrial ecology and people are engaged solely in manufacturing activity. There are no orchards in or around Richmond which provide the only means of sustenance to communities. Neither, as per the best of our information, does the pollution infested James river provide fresh fish to the surrounding localities. Food in the U.S.A. is supplied in a centralised and standardised manner to all the corners of the country, through a well-organised transportation and marketing system. Communities in developed countries such as U.S.A. seldom depend on their local food sources for sustenance.

"Considering the unique but vulnerable landscape of Goa and its fast dwindling natural resources, technology transplantation exercises will ruin the cultural ecology of this small State in a few years. Technology of the magnitude of Nylon 6,6 manufacturing can disturb the equilibrium of various interlinked ecosystems. Goa's land and aquatic ecosystems are interwoven in a biological sense. Their interdependence has kept this State's landscape, rivers and life-systems healthy."

Despite the adverse report of the House Committee, DuPont continued its attempts to win support in the villages around the proposed site and in Ponda town through gifts, donations and sometimes outright bribery. Faced with this persistence, the village communities, headed by Dr Dattaram Dessai, turned the siting of the Nylon 6,6 facility at Kerim into an all-Goa issue. This led to the formation of Ecoforum, a grand alliance of four of Goa's prominent environmental groups. Thus the battle would be fought now at all three levels: the local, the national and the international. The villagers—sup-

ported by Ecoforum—kept up a relentless campaign against activities at the site, physically preventing them when necessary, while Ecoforum used its contacts with the international environment community—including Greenpeace—to collect and distribute critical information about DuPont's activities as the world's largest polluter of the planet. International T.V. teams descended to the site, giving the local battle an international dimension. Eventually, much to its discomfort, DuPont had to announce its departure from Goa. The company thereafter relocated its project to Tamil Nadu but Goan environmentalists chased it there providing information they had collected to the groups in Chennai. They were thereby fulfilling the commitment set out in the "Ponda Declaration", which had announced that the Nylon 6,6 plant should not be allowed either in Goa or in any other place in the country.

Years of uncontrolled pollution from corporate giants had thoroughly immunized ordinary people against any assurances of improved practices or better behaviour. None of the fervent declarations made by DuPont regarding the allegedly non-polluting nature of its process or the claims that it had been granted clearances by both the Central and the State Pollution Control Boards were accepted at face value by the agitators. The successful ejection of DuPont from Goa has today become one of the major events in the country's effervescent environmental movement. Nilesh Naik, the young lad from Kerim who was killed by police firing during the agitation, was therefore declared the country's first direct environmental martyr. The full DuPont story has now been published in a book in Marathi written by Architect Kamlakar Sadhale, one of the leaders of the movement.

**Mining:**

The following portions relating to mining in Goa, written in 1978, are taken from *Inside Outside:*

> "We could begin with Japan. It is still possible to uncover people today that are willing to be impressed by the Japanese 'economic miracle'—to such fossils, the ecological problems created for Japanese folk in Japan itself do not detract from the impressive achievement. Neither for that matter do they concern me too: the Japanese may choke if that is what they choose. My point is that the Japanese economic miracle has been made possible in part, at the expense of vast ecological damage to various regions of the world, and Goa is one of these. Nobody today calculates the ravaging of Goa's splendid mountains and forests, the degradation of good ag-

ricultural land, the pollution of Goa's rivers, the reduced life span of the Goan miner as part of the cost of the Japanese economic miracle. Nobody explains why not.

The ore is expected to last Goa for another thirty years after which large parts of Goa should appear like a hideous nightmare. One has to take the road now from Tiska to Sanquelim to get some idea of the ruin and desolation: the wounds run through entire ranges of hills, green broken open with dull red; ugly mounds of eroding slopes as far as the eye can see.

Nobody is planning to clean up the mess, not the Chowgules, not the Salgaonkars, not the Dhempos or the Bandodkars. In 1971, nine million tonnes of iron ore fines left for Japan: in 1976, the figure was still eleven million tonnes. This year it may fall to seven million. Can anyone imagine what these millions of tonnes must be doing to the landscape *by not being there?* It would have been a different story if the mines were underground. They are not. Goan mining, like most iron ore mining in this country is open cast similar to strip mining in the US: remove the laterite layer, strip the ore. Remove the layers of 'overburdens' and scoop up the seam.

Open cast mining is total assault on the land; it uproots and destroys every plant, bush or tree and drives out every creature. Once the earth is pushed aside, the ore is exposed and loosened by explosives. When the ore has been lifted and carried away, a yawning pit remains, that may be as much as 200 feet deep. The land has been completely destroyed. The piled earth is subject to dangerous landslides, and erosion and acid or alkaline drainage destroys the streams and rivers as life-supporting systems.

Agriculture is affected when overburdens are dumped on agricultural land: overburdens consist of totally infertile soil—nothing can grow with the soil structure they have. More harmful is the earth from overburdens being carried over by rain to other fertile fields. Since overburdens carry a small amount of iron ore, this ultimately reduces the productivity of the fields year by year. In some areas, besides the polluted water damaging the fields, very often some of them get covered with small stones containing iron ore as the result of blasting operations.

Reclaiming such land is virtually impossible. In the US where strip mining companies are required by law to put back the overburdens and restart vegetation, so far 56,000

acres have been reclaimed (only for the coal industry) from a total of 1.8 million. In Goa there is no law, so ordinary people pay the cost, tenants lose their fields. The Japanese do not pay.

The subsidiary industries, particularly transport, raise their own host of ecological problems: the more truck loads a truck owner can make, the more he gets paid, to the detriment of his health, of the trees along the roads which get coated with a thick layer of ore dust, and the roads themselves that gradually erode under the impact of heavy duty vehicles, making transport a penalty for the rest of the populace. In Goa plenty of transporting is done by barges. Bailon de Sa wrote the following description about these:

'Some 25 years ago, the Mandovi had all the qualities of an ideal river. Meandering gently through lush green '*sagueiros*' flanking both its banks its beauty took a breathtaking note as it rose to its source and the green wooded hills sloped down to its banks as if to caress its waters. The hill of Santo Estevam was a vantage point to take in this idyllic splendour. The hills over Piligao (a summer resort to many) and the serried cordilleras over Bicholim and Sanquelim afforded a serene restfulness that smacked of an eternity of peace. From November to May from Ribandar to Verdi and higher, the river was studded with small canoes of local fishermen either angling or netting. And the fish was always in abundance: when the tide was high and the moon full, its beauty was indescribable.

'That was about 25 years ago. What is the picture today? The country craft has been driven away by the incessant plying of the barges, the fish have almost disappeared; the bunds are eroded and the *sagueiros* in some parts of the banks uprooted, leaving the banks to the merciless onslaught of the wash of the barges. Crossing the river in a canoe far from being a pleasure as it was then, is today fraught with endanger, there have been already some ghastly accidents...what could have been an ideal river for aquatic sports and regattas is today with the barges tearing up its waters an impossibility. In short, from Naroa upwards one sees only devastation—a veritable environmental atrocity!'

As Bailon notes, the barges break up the bunds that protect the agriculture in the khazan lands within. A study by the Pune Gokhale Institute had this to say:

'The farmers in Cumbarjua and Borim attributed the frequent breakages after 1954 to the barge movements in the narrow water courses in these villages, which started roughly by the same time. The speed with which these barges moved created very forceful waves which burst heavily against the bunds. There were restrictions on the speed at which the barges were permitted to move. It was, however, being said that these restrictions were observed only near the port. There being no inspectable speed charts in these barges (as in the railway locomotives for example) it was not possible to check the speed with which these barges moved.'

Japan is well known for its habit of 'dumping' goods on other market economies. What is not so well known is how industrialists and the Goa government have been 'dumping' iron ore on the Japanese market in a different way: give them the profits, keep the losses for the people here. Chowgule does not pay for the repair of the bunds. Neither does Japan. But we continue to speak of the Japanese economic miracle, of increased production, of profits."

Though 20 years have passed since the writing of the above it is disheartening to report that little has been done in terms of environmental rehabilitation of the mining areas. In 1981, the Indian Bureau of Mines carried out a fairly detailed survey of the environmental impact of mining particularly the contribution of exposed rejects to distribution of paddy fields, rivers etc. The report was not even circulated. In 1982, a High Power Committee headed by M.S. Swaminathan was set up by the Goa Government. It produced a detailed *Eco-Development Plan for Goa* in which several recommendations were made. The report has never been implem-ented.

The first major comprehensive study identifying both problems and solutions was eventually carried out by the Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) which submitted an interim report in 1997 and a final report in 1998. It took the government over a year to begin circulating the report and TERI itself, despairing of any action on the report, organised a one-day conference to discuss the proposals made in the report. It appears now that the government has finally accepted the recommendations of the TERI report. What this means however, in practice, is not known to anyone as the mine owners have begun a campaign claiming a recession in the mining industry while nobody knows where the funds for environmental rehabilitation are to come from or how to extract them from the mining barons.

In the meanwhile public distress against mining practices is so widespread that the first new mining lease coming up for a public hearing under the mandatory impact assessment notification required public hearing for such projects had to beat a hasty retreat as it became obvious during the public hearing that the local committees uncomfortable with past experience were no longer in any mood to permit opening of new mining pits.

**Plastics, garbage, litter, sewage and noise pollution:**

What I have recounted above are the seemingly intractable environmental problems that Goa has grown with, or been lumped with due to its leaders' blind acceptance of an imported industrialisation model. The list is not comprehensive. Dr Nandakumar Kamat has in recent years draw fervent and studied attention to the destruction of the khazan system by illegal aquaculture farms, the dying of the principal estuaries of the Mandovi and Zuari, and biodiversity losses within the Goan ecosystem.

There are also new and equally serious environmental issues that have emerged in the intervening period which are also making their presence felt largely due to the expansion of consumer culture. These are bothering citizens no end, since they signal a marked decline in the quality of life hitherto enjoyed in the state. They relate to the dispersal of plastic, garbage, litter and sewage and the phenomenon of noise pollution. Interestingly, these problem areas are calling forth positive citizens' initiatives that augur well for the future..

Plastic began its undesirable invasion of the Goan countryside and cities twenty years ago. Today, the omnipresent, coloured carry bags dumped cheaply on Goan traders and shop keepers by large number of plastic manufacturers are to be found everywhere. Every fair or festival leaves a vast sea of plastic litter when the stalls are taken down. Dead cows have been found with their stomachs choked with plastic. Marine turtles and certain fish species are also similarly affected. The plastic is now clogging streams and nullahs. It creates visual pollution. And there seems no end to the invasion.

In addition, the expansion of tourism has led to unimaginably large quantities of plastic water bottles being strewn all over the beaches and coastal villages.

Alarmed at what was happening, the Goa government brought forth the Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act, 1996 and ruled that the Act would come into force from 1st January 1998. Predictably no action has been forthcoming after that and even larger quan-

tities of plastics are now finding their way not only in the coastal villages but in the interior villages as well. The Ministry of Environment has brought out a very weak notification recently that seeks to prohibit use of coloured plastic bags below a certain micron size from being used for carrying food. However, there is no conceivable way in which such notifications and Acts can be enforced. Political will to ban production of such materials in the interest of protecting the country and its environment is simply absent.

Citizen action against the misrule of plastic is however gaining ground. Environment groups in Ponda, Panaji and Mapusa, and even foreigners and tourists residing in villages like Anjuna, have carried out programmes for collection of plastic litter or for replacing plastic bags with paper ones. More imaginative schemes and strategies are being planned.

Goans are beginning to discover also that they are extremely tolerant of overflowing garbage bins, litter, cesspools, and blocked drains. None of the coastal panchayats has bothered to equip itself to deal with the problems of garbage generated by tourism. The garbage of Candolim-Calangute is dumped unceremoniously in Saligao! The result is large areas of coastal Goa are looking extremely dirty and forbidding.

The incidence of one key indicator of ecosystem disturbance, the malarial parasite, is on a terrific increase, with malaria cases in certain areas shooting up by 5,000 cases every year. Despite stringent provisions in the Public Health Act and other legislation, builders still keep water untended for curing during construction, providing environments for mosquit-oes to breed. Government seems incapable of taking any action against offenders. The Bombay High Court at Panaji has been gamely attempting to supervise the carrying out of the anti-malarial programmes of the various municipalities and panchayats. Few people know what to do with the modern bureaucratic zombies manning most of these institutions: they simply do not care, even when their own kind get killed. They have to be constantly prodded into action by the Court. But for how long?

By far the most serious problem is contamination of ground water by overflow from septic tanks. Calangute water supplies are already contaminated, as studies from Goa University show. In Margao, Deputy Collector and Sub-Divisional magistrate, Rajesh Prasad, issued suo moto orders to restrain buildings from discharging untreated sewage into paddy fields. The Bombay High Court ordered an investigation when a news paper reported contamination of drinking water wells in Santa Cruz. It has also converted a letter addressed by citizens of Gauravaddo, Calangute, seeking reliefs against

Panchayat inaction on storm water drains and contaminating soak pits.

Another issue that has caused enormous anxiety to both locals and tourists who visit the state is the phenomenal noise pollution. From being a generally peaceful and serene state where the noonday siesta was a mandatory custom and cities and villages slept by nine, parts of Goa have today degenerated into arenas of blaring music that can sometimes continue up to six or nine in the morning with tacit support of the police. Beach parties are a particular nuisance. But so is the amplified music from rent-back schemes masquerading as hotels. This assault on the sensitive eardrum is assuming alarming proportions with the new culture of DJ music imported from Mumbai. In order to get the scarce tourist dollar, noisy festivals of all kinds are being organised.

Fortunately, due to sustained pressure from citizens' groups, noise pollution may be finally coming under control, with the government issuing circulars banning music after 12.00 pm from October till February and after 10.00 pm from March till October. Enforcing the implementation of the circulars is going to keep citizens busy for quite some time.

By and large, the phenomenon of increased citizen action is proof that people have lost faith in the administration and its laws and are ready to take matters in hand, leaving the government and the authorities including municipalities and panchayats, far behind.

The global movement to enforce environment rights, to protect the environment, to permit only self-sustaining development, and to protect resources for the needs of future generations has emerged largely through the actions of citizens and citizens groups. Those who fight will survive, even where they lose. Those who do not, will suffer and perish. Norman Dantas, in whose honour this essay was written, stood with those who were ready to put up a fight against environmental polluters, come what may. He opted for citizens groups and NGOs because, in his opinion, the political system showed a complete lack of commitment to environment concerns. This situation, he believed, could only be remedied by street actors who through their protests, demonstrations, letter-writing and phone-calls have succeeded in showing that the environment and its integrity is a non-negotiable agenda. The impact of the activities of Goa's citizen groups and NGOs on such environmental issues—from the scattering of DuPont to noise pollution control—is a vindication of his stand.

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Author's note: *For a detailed discussion of most of these issues, the reader is referred to Claude Alvares (ed).* Fish, Curry and Rice: A Citizens' Report on the Goan Environment, *(1999) Other India Press, Mapusa 403 507, Goa.*

10

# *TIATR: Expression of the Live, Popular Culture*

**Pramod Kale***

The historical experience of Goa—four-and-a-half centuries of political, social and cultural domination by a European nation—has given the Goan population an identity distinct from the rest of India. The British presence in India was of a shorter duration and much more diffuse. There were many territories such as the princely states where the British influence, administrative and cultural, was remote. In Goa, the Portuguese influence was direct and radical, affecting the population as a whole, at all levels. This is especially true of the three districts of Velhas Conquistas (Old Conquests)—Ilhas (Tiswadi), Bardez and Salcete. Most contemporary generalisations and stereotypical images of Goa and Goan society are based on the culture of these districts. The Novas Conquistas (New Conquests), although larger in terms of area, have a somewhat different cultural aspect.

The history of the interaction between the indigenous culture (mostly Hindu) and European culture (mostly Roman Catholic Christianity of the Iberian variety) has not always been a happy one. In its earliest phases, the interaction consisted of a violent confrontation with the local cultural traditions to transform them into the European mode. The roots of indigenous cultural traditions proved,

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**The writer, a US-based social scientist who pays extended visits to Goa regularly, has been studying various aspects of the local culture for almost a decade. This authoritative research paper was published in* Economic and Political Weekly *(Nov.22, 1986) under the title: 'Essentialist and Epochalist Elements in Goan Popular Culture'.*

however, to be too strong to be uprooted completely and many aspects of culture survived, even in a changed context, with the process of adaptation and assimilation. When, during the 18th and 19th centuries, a more liberal attitude began to prevail with the Church and the government, cultural performances in particular began to flourish amongst both Christian and Hindu populations of Goa.

The pre-colonial cultural traditions in Goa were centred around three institutions: the temple, the *gaonkari* (village organisation) and the *mand* (an informal voluntary organisation which dealt with local traditions and performances). The traditional cultural performances which still exist today have their base in one of these three institutions. During the colonial period, the place of the temple was taken by the village church, the *gaonkari* was transformed into comunidades and the *mand* adapted itself to celebration of feasts and performances honouring the new patron saints of the village.

During the early years of their colonial rule in Goa, the Portuguese launched a massive campaign to re-shape the cultural life of the newly converted Christian population. While complete assimilation and Europeanisation was attempted by a few very well-placed and well-connected native Christian families (whose members were professionals such as lawyers, doctors and educators) and while administrators began to share the power and the prestige of the colonial elite, the majority of the Christian population retained elements of their pre-Christian indigenous traditions in some form or other as part of their newly evolving culture.

Amongst the numerous cultural performances of Goa partaking of both indigenous and European transplanted traditions the most popular and vibrantly alive is the Konkani language *Tiatr*.[1] It is a form which is rooted in the working class and lower middle class Goan Catholic population living in Goa or outside, expressing their trials and tribulations, hopes and aspirations.

*Tiatr* is a unique performing arts genre. It has elements of drama, music, comedy and improvisation. In a typical *Tiatr* performance, there is a loose story line which runs through the show. It is punctuated by 'sideshows'—irrelevant and improvisational material consisting of songs (solos, duets and choruses called *cantar*), dances, comic skits and monologues—all to the accompaniment of a very loud Goan steel band which sits between the audience and the performers.

The plots of these dramas are contemporary. For the most part, the situations are set within the framework of family and domestic life. Their structure is episodic, each individual scene being a more

or less independent unit within an on-going, generalised framework. They play upon the empathic responses of the audience—especially of the women. The plays work within a strictly Goan Christian moral context and reflect a complex set of attitudes which include, amongst others, an intense regional/national pride for Goa and things Goan, a strong belief in the sanctity of family life and an abiding faith in God and his Church.

The language of the *Tiatr* is Konkani as it is spoken in the Bardez district. But the relationship between *Tiatr* and Konkani is much deeper. *Tiatr* can be said to be a celebration of Konkani. For *Tiatr* audiences Konkani is not merely a language, a medium of communication, but a cause, a Totemic symbol, a flag to rally around in fighting battles with the establishment and authority. At (current) *Tiatr* performances, the most enthusiastic and rousing response is reserved for the *cantarist* (singer) who stands up and calls the Konkani speakers to rouse themselves to fight battles for Mother Konkani so that she gets her rightful place as an official language in the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution.

In spite of the immense popularity of *Tiatr*, not enough attention has been paid to it by critics, scholars or researchers. The few articles in the English and Konkani popular press are somewhat cursory and superficial, given to quick overviews and incantation of well known names of writers and performers. This neglect is partly due to the scorn with which an influential section of the Goan population regards this popular entertainment: as being a vulgar expression of low taste.

The very fact that *Tiatr* is the most vibrantly alive and commercially successful theatrical entertainment of the Goans demands serious attention and inquiry into what makes it so. Popularity of this form suggests the existence of a shared, common code of values, attitudes, perceptions of Self and World between the encoders (the performers) and the decoders (the audience). These signs and symbols, forming the common code, are a part of the context (the historical background, the social and cultural institutions) and the text (*Tiatr* performances themselves). The context and the text are not treated here as two separate areas of inquiry but as totality and the search is holistic rather than atomistic.

This study looks upon theatre primarily as a social institution and upon communication in theatre as a social act. Although theatrical performance has many elements in common with other public performances such as the circus, magic, ritual, acrobatic and martial art displays, in *Tiatr* the enactment (mimetic presentation) of a story

through action, words and music appears to be the most important constituent of theatrical performance.

James R Brandon[2] and A S Gunawardana[3] have proposed separately two related sets of historical classification of theatre forms. Brandon identifies four main traditions of Asian theatre based on social environment: Folk theatre traditions; Court theatre traditions; Popular theatre traditions; and Modern theatre traditions. Gunawardana similarly postulates three types of Asian theatre: Traditional theatres which flourished under feudal circumstances but are fast disappearing because of their failure to accommodate large-scale social changes; Intermediate theatres, which still retain their 'epic' structure of story telling, but have moved from the sacral to secular and which are popular and even thriving; and Modern theatres which are the direct offsprings of western theatre and have spawned the present-day commercial and professional theatres of big cities and towns.

These systems of classification provide flexible frameworks to identify a place for *Tiatr*. It must be pointed out that the classificatory systems are used in a general way and many of its assumptions regarding 'modernity' and 'tradition' have had to be questioned in this study itself. Tradition and modernity as terms of reference to explain the process of social and cultural change are, in recent years, shown to be somewhat inadequate. The linear process of change that they seem to chart is often not borne by the reality of specific situations. Tradition and modernity are not fixed points of compass. The process of cultural-social change is more complex and flexible than a tradition-modernity model would suggest.

A more satisfying conceptual framework to explain the dynamics of change in societies and social institutions is to be found in Geertz's formulation of two distinct impulses, essentialism and epochalism, being at the root of the historical process of change. "Nationalist ideologies built out of symbolic forms drawn from local traditions which are essentialist tend, like vernaculars, to be psychologically immediate but socially isolating; built out of forms implicated in the general movement of contemporary history—that is, epochalist—they tend, like lingua francas, to be socially deprovincialising but psychologically forced. However, rarely is such an ideology anywhere purely essentialist or purely epochalist. All are mixed and one can speak at best only of a bias in one direction or another, and often not even of that...The interplay of essentialism and epochalism is not, therefore, a kind of cultural dialectic, a logistic of abstract ideas, but a historical process as concrete as industrialisation and as tangible as war."[4]

Goan Catholic cultural ethos, as it has evolved historically, is looked upon in this study as illustrative of the interaction between indigenous, nativist (essentialist) impulses and eclectic adaptation of norms, practices and forms of European culture (epochalism). This interaction is to be found in Goan social institutions as well as in cultural expressions such as *Tiatr*.

In order to understand *Tiatr* as an expression of popular culture, it is necessary to relate it to the historical processes which have shaped Goan Catholic society and Goan cultural ethos. Specifically for understanding a popular phenomenon such as *Tiatr*, it is necessary to understand predominantly mobile, lower middle class ethos which has contributed so much to and, in fact, shaped *Tiatr*.

The inquiry focuses on the Goan society, its hierarchical structure, the lower middle class migration from Goa, the spatial and temporal factors contributing to the formation of Goan ethos and the Konkani movement, and other cultural performances (both indigenous and foreign) which preceded and affected the development of *Tiatr*. These provide the context within which *Tiatr* operates. This is followed by a 'textual' analysis of *Tiatr*—the performers, the audience and the message, the structure and organisation, plots and themes.

## Goan Society and Stratification

What strikes one most about the contemporary Goan society is its highly complex and subtle divisions. The Portuguese seem to have very successfully implemented the policy of 'divide and rule'. One even suspects that the Portuguese were able to provide what may be called a prototype model for Apartheid.

The Portuguese rulers, in the first hundred years of their rule, tried out a policy of forced assimilation and integration of the local population. They used mass conversions and inter-racial alliances. They instituted harsh punitive measures such as deprivation of property and other rights exclusion and ultimate expulsion from the territory against the recalcitrant Hindu population. This policy, however, proved to be counter-productive. Later on, in the 17th and 18th centuries, they adopted a softer approach—a more flexible and less coercive model of separate and unequal existence, a prototype Apartheid model, as it were, for the various groups within the population.[5]

From the beginning of their rule in Goa in 1510, the divisions and groupings both amongst the conquerors and the conquered were many. They were based on colour, race, religion, caste, creed, birth, rank and occupation, amongst other things. The topmost layer consisted of the governing class—the high ranking Portuguese officers

and military commanders sent to Goa to conquer, to administer and to rule. They shared their power, *albeit* sometimes uneasily, with the bishops and archbishops, the prelates sent by both Rome and Lisbon. These were the *Fidalgos* (the nobly born). The very Portuguese concept of 'purity of blood' decided their social status. Those born in Portugal of the 'purest blood' and who came to India for a short period were the *Reinoes*. Those who spent almost all their lives here were *Indiaticos*. Those who were born in Asia to Portuguese parents were known as *Casticos*. The progeny of inter-racial marriages were *Mesticos* (Portuguese-Indian parentage) and *Mulattos* (Portuguese-African parentage).

Marital status and occupation also played their part in deciding status groups. Thus mere sojourners, unmarried Portuguese soldiers, *soldados*, were at the bottom of Portuguese colonial society in Goa while the married settlers belonged to a higher status group known as the *Casados*. As can be expected, the ranking based on blood often overlapped with the ranking based on marital status and occupation.[6]

The Portuguese conquerors looked down with great disdain and scorn upon the subjugated population because of its colour. The early Portuguese documents refer to the Indian population as a whole as *Pretos* (niggers).[7] The many methods of persuasion, some gentle and some not so gentle, practised by the European Catholic missionaries, especially the Jesuits, brought into existence a new division in the population of local converts (called the *Canarins* by the Portuguese). Because of mass conversions of whole villages which consisted of several communities and castes and because of the Portuguese rulers' own predilection for active support of hierarchical and occupational divisions, the 'New Christians' retained their caste affiliations and status grouping even under their new faith. In other matters of overt behaviour such as food, drink and dress, they were forced to adopt 'Christian practice' of eating beef and pork, drinking wine and using clothes tailored in the European fashion.

The two higher status caste groups amongst the Goan Catholics were the *Bamon* and the *Chardo*, corresponding to the Brahmin (Gaud Saraswats) and Kshatriya castes of the Hindus. (The *Chardo* probably included converts from other high status groups such as the Vani, Chati and even some non-Gaud Saraswat Brahmins).[8] Converts from other 'lower' Hindu castes were grouped together as *Sudir* corresponding to the Sudra cluster—a blanket term used to describe a number of occupational castes[9] with varying degrees of social status. Converts from the *Kunbi* and *Gavda* communities, the actual cultivators, formed a separate group.

The Hindu population which resisted conversion was subjected to numerous humiliations, to deprival of their rights and even expulsion during the first two centuries of Portuguese colonial rule. The Saraswat Brahmins were the dominating Hindu caste and, although some of them were accepted as collaborators and partners, as traders, agents of tax collection and interpreters, a large number had to leave their ancestral homes and settle in coastal areas of Karwar and Mangalore over the course of centuries. With the decline of the Portuguese ruling population and the rise of Hindu (Maratha) power in adjacent areas, the Saraswats were later able to regain and consolidate their position. The reinstatement of the Saraswat Brahmins and other Hindus was a gradual and slow process opposed by the Church and its clergy who watched over the special interests and privileges of the native Catholics through the office of *Pae Dos Cristaos* (The Father of Christians).

In the course of the 17th and 18th centuries the *Bamon* and the *Chardo* groups amongst the native Catholics had become increasingly caste-like endogamous groups with their membership determined on the basis of birth, and with very few new entrants into their ranks. The competition and rivalry between the *Bamon* and *Chardo* also continued to grow, till by the 19th century in Margao and the surrounding Salcete areas, these two elite Catholic communities of clergymen, landowners and administrators, were practically at war with each other.[10]

While the *Bamon* and *Chardo* groups ossified, the *Sudir*—a looser, more fluid group—grew because of continued conversion from amongst the lower castes of the Hindu population. Members of the *Sudir* group worked as tenant-farmers (*mundkar*) for the landed gentry on their fields and plantations. They also worked as menials and servants in their houses and places of business and as small independent tradesmen: carpenters, tailors, barbers, cobblers. Toddy tappers (*render*) and fishermen (*kharvi*) considered themselves to be separate groups. Bakers who had to be licensed by the Portuguese government came from the *Chardo* community. They received their rudimentary education in the three R's and music (to be able to sing and play at Church services) at the Parochial schools run by the clergy in the villages.

The clergy and through them the teachings of the Church were of much more importance to this lower caste section of Catholic population. The upper caste Catholic had either assimilated and lusitanised[11] or identified themselves with a larger European culture of liberal republicanism.[12] Among the former, the clergy and the Church were given token respect while among the latter, there was

tendency towards anti-clericalism. The *Sudir*, very few of whom owned property or resources, had to depend on the Church and the clergy for active intervention on their behalf by the office of the Father of Christians. In spite of this, even by the beginning of the 19th century, their overall economic position seems hardly to have improved.

As a matter of fact, it seems to have worsened, partly because of the reinstatement of the Hindu elites and partly because of the incorporation of the New Conquest districts with their large Hindu population. Beginning in the late 18th century, the comunidades (village councils) were heavily taxed by the government and by the Church. In the 16th and the 17th centuries the government had supported financially the various activities of the Church. It provided building sites for Churches and convents, defrayed the costs of construction and maintenance. It paid for the cost of the food and clothing of the priests. It also contributed towards the celebration of numerous feasts, many of which were on a lavish scale. In the year 1574, for instance, out of a total revenue of 8.8 million Reis from the three old conquest districts, the government spent 1.55 million or nearly 17.7 per cent on the Church.

With the decline of its maritime trade and commerce in the East, the colonial government found it difficult to bear the burden of these expenses. It gradually began to pass the burden of these expenses over to the comunidades through various devices such as *Jonos dos Santos* (Share of the Saints). By the end of the 18th century the comunidades (which raised their funds through voluntary contributions from the members of the village community) were subjected to an indirect taxation by having to pay for the masses, for the feasts and the processions of the Church, as well as for the repair and maintenance of the churches.[13] The village-based *Sudir* who were bound to the Church both morally and financially, had to make heavy financial contributions for the privilege of having the Church watch closely over their spiritual well-being.

The stagnant economy of late 18th and early 19th century Goa closed all doors of opportunity for this service community in their native land. The British occupation of Goa during the Napoleonic war made this group aware of possibilities of and opportunities for jobs and advancement which the British offered elsewhere, in India and abroad. These were the conditions which led to the first wave of emigration of Goans of lower middle class origin which has continued for the last one-hundred-and-fifty years.[14]

Along with the *Sudir*, some declassed and impecunious *Bamon* and *Chardo* (especially those who were bakers and confectioners) also

migrated. There was also a growing number of upper caste migrants who were accompanied by their families while the migrants of lower order were single males who 'clubbed' together in *kuds* (rooms) in Bombay.[15] Most of the early migrants were from the Tiswadi and Bardez areas and many of them had working knowledge of English as the British influence in the late 18th century was greater here. It was not till the opening of the railroad line later in the 19th century that large-scale migrations from the Salcete area to the north and south began.

*Sirvis* (service) was the main occupation of these emigrants. Most early Goan emigrants to Bombay worked as cooks, butlers and domestic servants. Some ventured into trades such as tailoring and baking. A large number worked as shiphands, and as cooks and waiters on foreign-going passenger and cargo ships.[16] These shippies or *tarwatis* as they were called earned good wages, could save substantial funds which they transferred to their families in Goa, where they were invested in buying small plots of land and building houses. A sizeable part of these funds was also spent in ostentatious living. This was probably promoted by a desire to compete with the life style of the affluent Goan aristocracy of landed gentry and professionals of the *Bamon* and *Chardo* communities.

## Goan Catholic Ethos

In spite of all these stratifications and class and caste barriers amongst various groups of the Roman Catholic population in Goa, one can perceive elements of what may be termed as Goan Catholic ethos which binds these groups together. The Goan Catholic ethos, or more particularly the ethos within which *Tiatr* as an institution operates, is the outcome of three main historical factors. The first one is the traditional Hindu social order with its belief in a strict hierarchy for the family and the society based on prescriptive rather than ascriptive norms. The second one is the Roman Catholic belief in the Church and its officials, in the sanctity of suffering and martyrdom, or humility and poverty, a belief in the ultimate triumph of good over evil and a belief in divine intervention and miracles realised through prayers, rituals and penance. (The Catholic framework in Goa is still more reflective of the Council of Trent than Vatican II.) The third factor is submission to and acceptance of colonial rule as a beneficial one because of the material benefits and rewards associated with it.

The complex love-hate relationship which the Goans seem to have with the outsider—whether he is a tourist, sojourner or a legal resident—seems to stem from this colonial factor. The outsider is

needed for the material benefits he brings, but resented for invading the space—the domain of the natives. The feeling of superiority which the lower middle class Catholic Goans used to have toward the Hindu Goans and toward the Indians in general was the direct result of this colonial mentality, where sharing of the religion and manners (if not the morals) of the rulers conferred a special status on the subject populations.

The City of Goa (*Cidade de Goa, Goa Xahar*) was the supreme spatial symbol of the Goan cultural synthesis. It was Golden Goa (Goa *Dourada*), the Rome of the East and a cosmopolitan urban centre—the seat of a seaborne empire. Both the power and the spirit of Portuguese colonialism were concentrated within its space. If the three districts of *Velhas Conquistas* represent the core of colonial Goa, the City of Goa represented the vital centre of this core. It stood for Christianity, for urbanity, for *civitas* and for power. The Goan countryside, on the other hand, represented a primordial Garden of Eden, an earthly paradise to which migrant Goans looked back with longing. Like the Biblical Eden, the Goan paradise was pre-Christian. People lived here in a state of natural grace. The City of Goa and the picturesque Goan countryside are two distinct, yet complementary spatial elements of the Goan self image and world view. In the case of the *Sudir*, mostly village-based, it was natural that the paradisical image of Goa was the dominant one.

## Konkani, Language of the Common Folk

The language of Goa, the speech of the common folk, Konkani (or *Concanim*, if one would spell it in the Portuguese manner) is a crucial (and increasingly important in political terms) element of the Goan ethos. Like the Goan landscape it is 'natural' and pre-Christian. It represents the strong bonds and common heritage the Goan Catholics have with the non-Christian Goans. Historically, the Goan elites—both Hindu and Catholic—did not have much use for it. Portuguese was the official language and the language of public discourse. The Catholic elites used it at home as well. For the Hindu elites Marathi was the cultural language, the language closely associated with their traditional institutions such as religion. But for the elites as well as for the large number of non-elites from both the religions, Konkani was always the first language (mother tongue) they acquired naturally as children. (This was the situation in the *Old Conquest* territories. In the *New Conquest* territories a large number of people speak a dialect form of Marathi as their first language—not unlike the Marathi dialect spoken in Sawantwadi and Kudal areas of Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra).

Although the official language of colonial Goa was always Portuguese, the Catholic missionaries who were entrusted with the responsibility of spreading the word and converting the heathens to Christianity, learned and used the local languages, Marathi as well as Konkani for this purpose. They used Roman characters to transcribe the sounds, the orthography being the one used for Portuguese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Jesuits who were in charge of the spiritual welfare and moral education of the Catholics in Salcete district and the Franciscans who held similar responsibility for Bardez district, produced a number of books and tracts on religious subjects. These were the first printed books in any Indian language.

While Marathi, especially literary Marathi, had by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made long strides toward developing a received standard form, the speech of the native population of Goa (*Lingua Canarim*, as the Portuguese called it) remained a conglomeration of dialects marked by regional and caste variations. The speech of the Hindu population differed from that of the Catholic population. Even amongst the latter, the Salcete Catholics spoke differently from their brothers in Bardez. Adoption of the Roman script and Portuguese orthography led to a further separation between the Hindu and Christian speech habits. Amongst the Hindus too, the speech of the Goa and Saraswat Brahmins differed from the speech of the other castes. The divisions and subdivisions among the population were expressed and preserved through this dialect variations, but there still was a core structure which made them mutually comprehensible.

Given time and propitious circumstances these dialects might soon have evolved into received standard form. However, in 1684 a decree was promulgated by the Conde de Alvor, the viceroy, suppressing the use of all local and indigenous languages and requiring the entire Catholic population to learn and switch over to Portuguese within a period of three years. A political exigency of a very serious kind threatened the existence of Goa as a colony and, on the face of it, caused the viceroy to promulgate this decree—the incursion of the Marathas into Goan territories. Since the native speech of Goans—both Hindu and Christian—had obvious links with the language of the invaders, the viceroy thought he would forestall any attempts at sympathetic revolts, sedition or collaboration with the enemy by breaking the linguistic bonds and turning the Goan population into staunch Portuguese speaking loyalists. But clerical rivalries between the Jesuits and the Franciscans, between the local and foreign clergy, provided the real reasons for this decree.[17] Once the early enthusiasm

for proselytising the natives in their own language had subsided, the missionaries, especially the Franciscans in charge of Bardez, had found it cumbersome and wasteful of time and energy to learn the local language. Besides, the requirement that a priest should know the local language put the foreign priests at a disadvantage. The Franciscans who had long been feuding with the Jesuits and campaigning against these handicaps, found in the atmosphere of fear and paranoia a proper occasion to persuade the viceroy to act and promulgate the decree for suppression of native languages.

The decree brought about further polarisation creating divisions and cleavages amongst the Catholic Goans. The elite Catholics in cities and towns as well as the landed gentry in the countryside could make the switch easily and some even welcomed it as an essential element of Europeanisation. The lower class, lower caste *Sudir* Catholics, however, found themselves in a quandary. They lacked the education, the social background and the status to become members of a Portuguese-speaking milieu. Since in the villages they moved and worked with non-Catholics who continued to speak their own language, it was impossible for them to adopt a foreign language as their own. However the decree, over time, did affect the speech of lower class Catholics making it distinct from that of non-Catholics. With an infusion of Portuguese loan words, and a tendency toward the use of syntax reflecting the Portuguese, the Konkani spoken by the non-elites showed signs of creolisation.

The clergy—the Jesuits of Salcete especially—continued to use the local Konkani for hymns and oratorios. The landed gentry and the elites used Konkani to express their feelings and emotions through the songs and poetry of *Mando* and *Deknni*. By the early 19th, century, the image of Salcete Konkani as a vehicle for poetry was established and became an ongoing tradition.[18] Bardez Konkani, on the other hand, the language of the Goan emigrants, established itself as a vehicle for prose. This was the language from which emanated, by the end of the 19th century, a great deal of popular literature—newspapers and magazines, simple tales and novels. The base for this was laid significantly enough, not in Goa but in the British Indian territories in places like Pune and Bombay.[19]

The movement toward a received standard Konkani as a language of discourse and public communication, based on the Bardez dialect, was helped by the efforts of the 19th century cleric scholar, lexiconist and academician, a respected figure in Goa where he was born and in Portugal where he taught, Monsignor S R Dalgado.[20] Dalgado put standard Konkani firmly within the group of middle Indo-Aryan languages deriving from Sanskrit. He reversed—or at

least discouraged—the process of creolisation of Konkani. He restored many Sanskritic and other indigenous language words to Konkani and even expanded its scope by proposing alternatives based on local linguistic traditions. Dalgado's position in the Church and Academia and his posthumous fame brought to it the acceptance of a received standard Konkani, based on Indian linguistic tradition as a fit vehicle for communication in the Church for the sermons and homilies which priests at various levels delivered to their congregations. The high flown declamatory *sermao* Konkani or *Padri Bhas* was a result of this acceptance.

In the 1880s attempts were made to lay the foundations of secular literature, especially fiction, by writers such as Eduardo who produced romantic novels (modelled after Alexander Dumas' romances in French) and by F Y Fernandes Liberal.[21] Perhaps because of a lack of readership for these quality novels, the form soon deteriorated to the melodramatic and didactic as in the prolific production of Antonio Vincente da Cruz. Cheaply produced and printed and avidly read by the 'shippies' and other emigrant workers of the lower middle class, the 'romances' as they were called, provided the popular fictional genre. These 'romances' which continue to be popular are escapist tales of love and adventure with a heavy coating of morality. Bonaventure de Pietro, Jesse Fernandes, A Gomes, Reginald Fernandes are some of the fecund authors of these romances. In a way, these romances can be considered to be the counterpart in popular literature of what *Tiatr* is in terms of popular theatrical performance.

## Tiatr and Konkani

Joao Agostinho's *Tiatr* was a reformist movement of the last decade of the 19th century. Agostinho himself was *Chardo* and an educated man. It was his disgust with the vulgarity of the *zagor* performed in Bombay by the Goan clubs for more than three quarters of a century before him, that led him to experiment with and launch a new form of theatrical presentation. Although the texts of his plays are not extant, from the praise they received from being high-minded and moral (as against later *Tiatr* which is condemned, like the earlier *zagor* which it was supposed to replace, as being vulgar and cheap, pandering to low taste).

One can assume that the language used for dialogue was a refined version of the Bardez dialect. The language of *Tiatr* even today is Bardezi no doubt, but it is not the Bardezi of the actual colloquial speech. It is a stage Bardezi (written and spoken mostly by Salcete

writers and actors) delivered in intonation patterns and cadences which have more to do with the conventions and artifice of the stage than the actual speech of the people. It is in the sideshows that the comedians use and play with the colloquial and natural elements of the language. It must be mentioned that the increasingly popular *Khel Tiatr* of the present day show a tendency toward naturalism in dialogue.

The Hindu Konkani, the so-called Antruzi dialect espoused by V R Varde Valaulicar (Shenoy Goembab) as literary vehicle, has had very little to do with the Konkani used in the past and present in the performance of *Tiatr*. Occasionally, these Hindu characters are major protagonists (as in *Ekuch Rosto* and *Konkno*) in plays advocating Hindu-Catholic marital alliances who speak refined Goan Saraswat Konkani, but more often the *Konkno* (Hindu) with his *dhoti*, cap and peculiar speech is an object of parody and ridicule in the sideshows. Although most enlightened Catholics look upon this as a vestige of a dead past, its presence is acknowledged and condemned by a reformer and *Tiatrist* in his contribution to a recent issue of a popular Konkani magazine.[22]

Konkani used in *Tiatr* is thus a stage language based partly on the actual speech of the Bardez Catholics and partly on the high sounding, declamatory, formal Konkani adopted for public discourse especially from the pulpit. This artificiality does not seem to affect adversely the popularity of *Tiatr*. The new Konkani drama (*natok*), on the other hand, consciously using the rhythms of natural colloquial Konkani, seems to have very little popular appeal as performance, though respected as literature.

## Historical Antecedents of Tiatr

Although Konkani *Tiatr* itself began in Bombay as late as in 1892 with the staging of *Italian Bhurgo*, in Goa there existed a history of theatrical performances in European languages—mainly Portuguese, but also in Spanish and French—from the 17th to 19th century. These performances were not popular by any stretch of imagination, being written, staged and acted by the elite. The earliest reference one can find is to Fr Francisco do Rego (1635-1686), who, besides his famous *Tratado Apologetico contra varias calunias contra a sua Nacao Bramane*, also left *Comedias Varias*, which also remained unpublished according to Barbosa Machado (*Biblioteca Lusitana*, Vol 4, 1741-59). He was followed by Mateus Lacerda (late 17th century or early 18th century) who wrote poetry in the mother tongue (Konkani), Portuguese and Castillian, and also several comedies.[23]

The manuscripts were lost and it is not known if the plays were staged.

In 1751 a French play, *La Tragedie de Porus* by Corneille and a Portuguese play *Adolonymo em Sydonia* were performed during the week-long celebration ordered by the viceroy in connection with the coronation of D Jose I as King of Portugal. The celebration, incidentally, coincided with the fall of Bassein and the loss of the 'Northern Province'.[24]

In one of the earliest available issues of the Portuguese weekly, *O Ultramar* we find a notice for *Teatro* being performed by a "band of curious young men...at the house of Padre Mestre Pacheco in the hall where at one time classes of Latin were held..."[25]

An example of the early Teatro in Portuguese written by a Goan and performed in Goa is the play *Os Dois Irmaos Doidos as Duas Meninas Vizinhas* (The Two Mad Brothers and the Two Neighbouring Girls), by Inancio Custodio Coelho in 1866 and staged at the Teatro Harmonia, by that time set up in Margao. He was followed by Luis Napaleao de Ataide (1909), author of *A Mulher do Artista* (The Wife of the Artist), *O Filho do Mestre Jorge* (The Son of Master George), *A Viúva do Comandants* (The Widow of the Commander) and Nobreza de Alma (Nobility of the Soul), all published in 1901, and by Antonio Jose dos Martires Sousa, author of *Viva O Tio Regedor* (Long live Uncle Patel).[26]

Other examples of Portuguese language *Teatro* written by a Goan and performed in Goa, can be found in the work of Joaquim Filipe Neri Soares Rebelo (1873-1922) whose *Obras Completas*[27] in three volumes were published by his son in Mozambique in 1973. Volume I contains *O Rei-Milhao*, comedy drama in two acts (performed at Margao 1900), *O Pexote*, comic monologue (performed at Verna 1895, Margao 1904), *Efeitos da Pinga*, comedy in one act (performed at Nova Goa, 1906), *O Senhor Serapiao*, comic sketch (performed at Margao in 1908), *Tempestade em Copo de Agua*, comedy in one act (performed at Margao in 1908), *Os Dois Namorados*, comedy in one act (performed at Margao in 1909), *Mogarem*, historical drama in four acts (performed at Margao 1910 and at Coimbra 1912).

The other tradition of elite performances which began in the 19th century was that of the *Mando* and *Deknni* dances. *Mando* and *Deknni* were the entertainment of the rural elite and the landed gentry in their stately homes and drawing halls; the performances of Portuguese language Teatro appear to be more urban-based and bourgeois-centred.

*Mando* (with Dulpod) and *Deknni* developed in the 19th century

as two major cultural expressions of the upper crust of Goan society. The songs of *Mando* are plaintive, nostalgic love lyrics, gently evocative of the life in Goan villages as seen through the eyes of the elite Europeanised gentry. The dance is performed by a group of couples. The men are dressed in black coattails. The women's costume bears a close resemblance to that of women in Portuguese Macau and in South East Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The movements are slow and stately in the beginning but become spirited as the tempo gathers. *Mando* was performed in the great halls of the Goan aristocracy to celebrate various social occasions, especially weddings. *Mando* thus is a synthesis of Lusitanian culture and a the cultures of Lusitanian Asia, the former Estado da India.

*Deknni*, on the other hand, looks towards Hindu India for its inspiration, its lyrical themes and its costumes (the women dancers wear the traditional nine yard saris of the Hindus of Goa and the neighbouring Deccan (Maratha country). The music is Western, but the dance movements belong to the local traditions. *Deknni* is a romantic recreation of a past which, for members of the Goan aristocracy, was an ethnic memory more than anything else. Romantic nostalgia is the dominant modality (*Bhava*) of both *Mando* and *Deknni*. In the 19th century and 20th century when the Goan elites emigrated with their families to East Africa, Europe, the United States and Canada, they took with them the *Mando*. It reinforced their longing for their motherland through its lyrical fusion of the Goan landscape and what were perceived as "Goan" feelings.[28]

Considering the hierarchical nature and compartmentalisation of colonial Goan Catholic society, it is doubtful whether these elite performances had any direct influence on the humbler and more popular cultural expression such as the Konkani *Tiatr*. It must, however, be admitted that the early performances of Konkani *Tiatr* were styled as *Teatro* and the first troupe which performed *Italian Bhurgo* in Bombay in 1892 styled itself as Goa Portuguese Dramatic Company.

## Non-Elite, Village-Based Performances

The non-elite, especially the *Sudir* based in villages, had their own performances. These were *khel (phell)*, *zagor* and the *contra danca*. *Khel* is a Sanskrit word which means game, sport or play. In other areas of coastal Konkan, *khel* and *khele* are names used for ritual dances performed by various village communities at the time of the Hindu festivals such as *Holi*. Amongst the Goan villagers, vari-

ous kinds of *khels* are performed by the Catholic villagers, mostly at the time of the pre-Lenten carnival, traditionally known as Carnival. There are some which are performed at Easter and during the Christmas season. The most elaborate of these is the *mussallam phell* (pestle dance)[29] performed by the *Chardo* families of the villages of Cotta Chandor and Cavorim in Salcete district on the second and third days of the Carnival. This is a group dance performed by male dancers each one of whom represents a *Gaonkar* (bona fide residents of the village) family. The costumes are those of pre-Portuguese Hindu inhabitants. The dancers carry stout jangling sticks (*mussal*) with which they pound in unison. Starting at main village church the dancers go from house to house accompanied by a man dressed as a bear which is "caught" ritually the day before the dance, and four torch-bearers. They dance in front of the houses of the *Gaonkars* only, consecrating the house and the family. Many of these houses have been closed and some have decayed as their owners live abroad, but the dancers perform there all the same. At the end of the dance, a woman dressed as a *Mahar* sweeps the spot and sprinkles water over it. The villages where this dance is performed stand on the site of an ancient (probably Mauryan) capital of Goa known as Chandrapur and the tradition which this dance represents is certainly of considerable antiquity.

There were, however, other kinds of *khel* performed during the Carnival, again in the villages of Salcete area. Till thirty years ago, these *khels* were performed commonly in villages such as Colva, Benaulim, Chinchinim, Varca, Nessai (St Jose de Areal). The performers were amateurs and their fare consisted of satirical and humorous skits and sketches on village life as well as dramatisation of folk tales and traditional mythological stories. The performers were mostly from the *Sudir* community. The material was largely improvised. The musical accompaniment consisted of two drums, one of which was bass, and a trumpet or a clarinet. The drummer usually belonged to the (Catholic) *Mahar* community. Women characters were acted out by impersonators.

There was a great deal of obscenity and vulgarity in the social sketches. Since there were a number of married women in these villages, separated from their husbands who worked on ships or in British India and Africa, cuckolding, extra-marital affairs and other local gossip figured largely in these sketches. Prominent villagers invited the performers to perform at their houses for a payment of a few rupees, ranging from fifteen to fifty. The performance lasted from one to two hours and was divided into four pat (parts; episodes). The social sketches were *Bhatkar Pat* (showing the tussle between the

landlord and the tenant), *Tarvati Pat* showing the fortunes and misfortunes of the sailors), and *Konknnyacho Pat* (which ridiculed the ways of the Hindu Goans—*Konknnos*). *Devcharacho Pat* or *Raksasa Pat*, based on traditional myths and folk tales showed the exploits of demons and giants of the yore [one of the celebrated *khel* performers was *Hada* (bearded) Miguel of Varca, who reenacted the fighting of the Second World War with a troupe of thirty people].

*Contra danca* was similar to *khel*, in which the improvised material satirised the pomposity and cupidity of the landlords, but it eschewed the vulgarity and ribaldry of the *khel*. The *contra danca* performers were accompanied by one or two violinists. There were no percussion or wind instruments in consort. The big landlords invited them to perform in their mansions and the prelude to the performance consisted of their ceremonial procession and only through the great hills. The landlords laughed at their own foibles but a certain decorum was always maintained by the performers which was lacking in the more boisterous public performance of the *khel*.[30]

The *khel* (with the notable exception of the *mussallam phell*, which is a community performance) and *contra danca* performances can be looked upon as ritualistic precursors of modern theatre in which the relationship between the performers and the audience is that of the seller and the buyer—a commercial transaction. In *khel* and *contra danca*, the individual householders and the landed gentry act as patrons and the performers as beneficiaries in a semi-feudal framework of social relationship. The community as a whole does not play any role in these performances.

*Zagors* (the word is borrowed from *Jagar*, a Hindu performance genre in Goa) were performed at the time of certain village feasts and church festivals, sponsored by the village community as a whole. The expenses for these performances came from the common village funds. The audience and the performers of *zagor* were co-celebrants and not buyers and sellers or patrons and beneficiaries. (Amongst the Hindus, there two distinct kinds of *Jagar* performances: *Perni Jagar* is a ritual performance of the *Perni* community in temples and *Gavda Jagar* which is performed by members of the aboriginal *Gavda* tribe for the entertainment of the village. The word *Jagar* is itself revived from Sanskrit and refers to a night-long performance, a vigil)

*Zagor* performances were popular in the Catholic villages of the Bardez district. They are very similar to the *Gavda Zagar* of the Hindus and consist of a series of appearances of caricatured stereotyped characters from village life as well as characters from the world of fantasy. There is no theme or story, but each character represents its essence through song and dance; sometimes there is rudimentary and

ribald exchange between two characters. The musical accompaniment consists of the indigenous *ghumot* (a semi-hemispherical earthen vessel, the front covered with lizard skin, the bottom an open, short tube) and *madlen*, a cylindrical earthenware vessel. Many of the religious feasts at which these *zagors* were performed have disappeared. One remnant is the *zagor* at Siolim performed on the first Monday after Christmas.

When the first wave of the lower middle class Goan migrants from the Bardez district settled themselves in Bombay and organised their lives around the village clubs, they also seem to have taken *zagor* with them as a part of their cultural life. *Zagors* were performed by Bombay Goans as early as 1820.[31]

In Goan villages, the organisation and expenses for ritual performances such as *zagor* were the responsibility of a unique Goan village institution called the *Mand*. *Mand* is the name for an open space in the village which, through traditional usage, has become sanctified. It is the place used for the inaugural worship which precedes ritual performances such as *zagor* and *mussallem phell* amongst the Christians, and *Shigmo* and *Dhalo* amongst the Hindus. An informal voluntary organisation, the *Mand* supported through voluntary contributions the ritual performance of religions at the popular level, both Hindu and Christian. Whereas the village comunidades supported the feasts and festivals of the established religion, the *Mand* watched over and regulated the humbler forms of worship and celebration.[32]

In Bombay, the function and responsibility of the village *Mands* was transferred to the village clubs. The clubs provided a powerful social system for the migrant Goan population and provided strong linkages with local Goan traditions. Very few of these clubs were from villages where the *Bamon* predominated (such as Saligao, Moira, Loutolim). Most clubs were *Chardo* and *Sudir* village clubs. They provided the audience as well as the performers for the new entertainment format introduced by Agostinho and Ribeiro.

## Role of the Church

The service rendered by the Church in popularising western music through the centuries cannot be underestimated. Every parish church took upon itself to acquaint its humblest parishioners with the rudiments of Western music, especially the violin, opening up some additional avenues of making money, especially in the 19th century British India. But one cannot say that the Church, in its long history, has contributed much to the development of theatre in Goa.

The role that the Church played in medieval Europe and some colonies through mystery and miracle plays, through passion plays and Lenten performances seems to be, at best, minimal in Goa.

In the early 16th century, references are found to the staging of many tragedies, comedies and tragi-comedies on religious themes by the Church in Goa. There were also performances of passion plays and dialogues on religious subjects. The correspondence of local Jesuits with their superiors in Rome and Lisbon contain brief accounts of such performances. The language of these performances was Latin and the purpose of the staging was to demonstrate the achievement of the native seminarians to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, to propagate faith and to provide 'wholesome' diversion.[33]

Besides these neo-classical performances in Latin, religious plays in vernacular languages were staged on festive occasions such as Christmas, Easter and Corpus Christi as well as passion plays during Lent. A play in the vernacular performed on the occasion of the day of the conversion of St Paul (January 25) in 1586 at the College of St Paul in the City of Goa seems particularly noteworthy because of its connection with the form of the medieval spectacle and pageant plays of Europe. The play described as a "short and gay dialogue on conversion to Christianity"[34] was performed to celebrate the baptism of native neophytes. The plot was very simple. It opens with the appearance of the City of Goa, accompanied by the neighbouring islands of Chorao, Divar, Salcete and Bardez. Goa complains of the scanty zeal shown in matters of conversion. To this, the devout Lady Conversion, who enters next, responds by reassuring Goa that there would take place new conversions. She then disputes with various pagans and the devil himself, refuting their arguments. As a result of this, the pagans discard their turbans, cut off their topknots and partake of the food of the Catholic to general rejoicing.

When the government passed on the burden of Church expenses to the local communities, beginning the seventeenth century, the staging of such performances seems to have suffered and may account for the loss in Goa of a continued tradition of performances involving live actors and dialogue. The Inquisition might also have contributed to this loss.

Curiously enough, one finds a reference to a miracle play performed by live actors in the same tradition but not in Goa. Portuguese monks staged this at an old Portuguese mission established at Aurangabad during the post-Bahamani period. Meadows Taylor writes of how he was moved by the performance which he saw in 1825 at Aurangabad. "A miracle play on the life of our *Lord* was performed there by them, beginning with the scene of Birth, and end-

ing with the Crucifixion. Although, no doubt, it could not bear comparison with Ammergau (sic), yet it was curious and strange. Portuguese monks chanted the story in their own tongue, interspersed with bad Hindostanee, but the effect was very impressive; and the last scene, a real man hanging to the cross, was the signal for wailing and groaning from the spectators, who looked on with awe and wonder."[35]

As far as the Konkani *Tiatr* is concerned, one must mention that the negative attitude of the Church toward this popular entertainment form underwent a complete change in the 1960s when Goa was liberated and the winds of a new ecumenical and tolerant spirit began to blow in the Catholic world in the wake of Vatican II.

As a popular form of entertainment, the *Tiatr* often tended to be irrelevant if not downright profane. Although existing strictly within the Roman Catholic code of morality, the *Tiatr* often made fun of the sanctimonious and the hypocritical. The Church establishment always looked upon the *Tiatr* and the *Tiatrist* with suspicion. In pre-Liberation Goa there were strict rules as to what could or could not be shown in *Tiatr* performances. Amongst other things *Tiatr* performance could not depict a priest as a character, nor could the priest's habit be used as a disguise for any character, confession and confessional sanctity could not be ridiculed. Priests, secular or religious, could not associate with or attend *Tiatr* performances.

All this has radically changed since 1961. Not only are priests depicted as characters in *Tiatr*, but real life priests actively participate in the production, organisation and performance of *Tiatr* hoping to use it as an instrument of Christian enlightenment; and confessional sanctity as well as the priestly habit seem to have lost their privileged positions.

An important question to be investigated is how far *Tiatr* is influenced by the older traditional Hindu performances in Goa. It has been pointed out earlier that, during the first three centuries of colonial rule, both the Portuguese administrators (through enactment of a series of draconian measures and promulgation of *forals*) and the Catholic Church (through the Holy Office i.e. the Inquisition) tried first to drive out all Hindus from the three districts of *Velhas Conquistas* (Old Conquests). When this was found to be impracticable, they embarked upon a policy of setting up two completely segregated societies in Goa. How far they succeeded in doing this is a matter of debate. The composition of Christian *Purana* on the lines of Hindu *Purana*, the existence of Christian ritual performances such as the *mussallem phell* of Chandor and the *zagor* of Siolim are considered to be examples of persistent and continuing Hindu influence

on the cultural expressions of Goan Catholics. It would, however, be injudicious to conclude on the basis of this that *Tiatr*, a modern, semi-urban, non-ritualistic performance was influenced by the existence of a variety of other popular Hindu performances in Goa such as *Kala* or *Dasavatara*.

## Performance, Performers and Audience

*Tiatr* and *Khel Tiatr* performers can be roughly divided into two main categories: the commercial and the amateurs. The commercial *Tiatrist* look upon *Tiatr* primarily as a money-making activity. It would be wrong to use the word professionals to describe them as they lack most of the pre-requisites of professionalism. Most of them have full-time jobs in other fields and use their acting and singing ability to generate some quick additional income for themselves and their families. It is only when they achieve the status of 'stars' that they devote themselves full-time to *Tiatr*. Such cases are very rare.

The *Tiatr* troupes are organised on an *ad hoc* basis. There are no permanent companies or repertoires. The town of Margao in Salcete taluka is the organisational centre for *Tiatr* and related activity. There are three or four well frequented eating and drinking establishments at which these activities are conducted. They are in the centre of the town near the Margao municipality, the municipal gardens and the municipal market. Since the 19th century, Margao has been proud of its honorific title, *Athens of Goa*. There might be some significance in the flowering of Konkani *Tiatr* in close proximity of its civic facilities.

The *Tiatrist* themselves live in the various small village communities near Margao such as Loutolim, Benaulim, Colva, Curtorim, Assolna, Raia, Fatorda, etc. There are various networks formed on the basis of a common or shared village background, schooling or kinship. For example, currently there are many popular Khel *Tiatr*, which have originated from the village of Benaulim. There appear to be at least five successful *Khel Tiatrist* writing in and working from Benaulim. It should be noted that the 'commercial' *Tiatrist* often denigrate these successful money-making *Khel Tiatrist* as opportunistic amateurs who pack the troupes with their family members.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are serious dedicated amateurs who shun money-making practices, look upon *Tiatr* as an instrument of non-formal education and social change. These are 'serious reformers' who deplore the slipshod methods, lack of education and social purpose of the commercial *Tiatrist*. Where the commercial

*Tiatrist* have merely a couple of rehearsals before they open a show, the 'serious reformers' have three weeks or more of rehearsals. Whereas the commercial *Tiatrist* do not bother themselves with the publication of their scripts once the run is over at least one 'serious reformer' has taken the trouble to publish his scripts.[36]

Besides the 'serious reformers' we have another group of amateurs who are generally the younger and more enthusiastic members of the village communities or town wards, whose interest seem to be divided between football (soccer) and *Tiatr*. Banding together under such names as Jolly Boys Club of St. Agostinho, Santa Cruz or Jolly Boys Club of Borda, Margao, they enter the annual competition of amateur *Tiatr* organised by the Kala Academy in Panjim and perform heroically if not skilfully to an audience which has come—if at all it has to jeer rather than cheer. For the most part, these are teenage and young adult *Tiatr* fans who dream of making a breakthrough into the commercial world of *Tiatr*. They also perform at their village feasts.

The rewards in commercial *Tiatr* are high for those who make it. The highest payment per performance for the top *Tiatrist* is Rs.300. At present there are only three or four *Tiatrist* who command such fees. It should be remembered that a successful performance might be staged at five different places in Goa from 10 am to 12.30 am during a single day. A star *Tiatrist* with stamina stands to make as much as Rs.1500 during the day. The average pay per performance is Rs.100. The individual members of the band which is recruited locally are paid much lower.

Although *Tiatr* are performed throughout the year, the summer holiday season (April to June) and the Diwali-Christmas-Carnival season (October to February) are the two main seasons. These are the seasons when expatriate Goans return to Goa, many as patrons but sometimes also as performers. During this season, the *Tiatr* which originate in Bombay tour the home counties, combining business with pleasure. Like the municipal square in Margao, the Dhobi Talao area in Bombay is the centre of Goan cultural life and during the rainy season there is more *Tiatr* activity in Bombay than in Goa.

A *Tiatr* performance is, generally, a combination of several inputs. This individual either writes or gets hold of a script and contacts persons from his network for their participation. Since these performers are participating in a number of *Tiatr* at the same time, besides having full-time jobs, the juggling of their schedules and dates for performance become the primary responsibility of the initiator/producer. Creative abilities and artistic aspirations have con-

stantly to be subsumed to managerial skills. It is no wonder that often the whole cast meets for the first time at the first performance.

The contractor is the most important person in the business of *Tiatr*. Contractors come from all walks of life. There are contractors who are shopkeepers and there are contractors who are officers in the Goa police force. Barring one star *Tiatrist* who is a good businessman as well, all other *Tiatrist* have to depend on the contractor for an assured income.

The contractor is responsible for the rental of the theatre, the audio system and publicity. He pays a lump sum to the initiator-leader which for *Tiatr* averages Rs.6,000 per performance and for *Khel Tiatr* Rs.4000 per performance. His income for a capacity house of 2,000 in a temporary shed is estimated to be Rs.17,000 and for a full house of 1,000 seats in a permanent theatre to be Rs.10,000. Expenses which the initiator/producer/author/director has to meet from the lump sum payment are: payments for artists (per person)—Rs 100-150 average (Rs.300 top); band (total—Rs.450-500); make-up—Rs.75; prompter—Rs.75; settings and props—Rs.300 to 400; and light effects—Rs.100 to 200. Besides this, a troupe from Bombay has to bear the expenses for travel to and from Bombay, boarding and lodging as well as travel in Goa. It also pays the cost of letter press blocks for publicity material such as handbills.[37]

On an average, a run of fifty performances is considered to be a fair one. The runaway hit of the current season, a domestic melodrama, based on a real life event has already passed the 150 mark and returned from a tour of the Gulf countries. Although the amateur *Tiatr* competitions held annually by the Kala Academy in its outdoor auditorium are very poorly attended (in spite of the very low admission fee charged), the commercial *Tiatr* and *Khel Tiatr* troupes, which include at least one or two well known performers (generally either *cantarist* or comedians) play to capacity houses in towns and village communities during the season.

## The Performances

*Tiatr* and *Khel Tiatr* performances are staged at the permanent theatres available in Margao, Panjim and Mapusa, the main towns of the Velhas Conquistas. They are also staged at the numerous feasts and festivals held in honour of the patron saints of various village communities. On such occasions, a temporary stage and an enclosure for the audience are erected. There is a marked difference between the spirit and composition of the audiences in towns and villages.

*Tiatr* performances in towns or villages are known for their tardiness. It is considered normal for a performance to start 30 to 45 minutes late. In the villages, a performance scheduled for 10.30 pm might well start at 12.30 am and the audience would hardly know the difference as their festive spirit is being nourished through other means. This festive audience is also more enthusiastic, demanding and outspoken in their responses. The *cantaram* (songs) which they like are given encores so many times that they have a tendency to become real show stoppers. The performances at town theatres have constraints of time and place and as such are comparatively more tame and less free flowing.

*Cantaram* are the most essential elements of the performance of *Tiatr*. These *cantaram* are composed and set to music by the *cantarist* themselves. Often, these songs are written and improvised for the particular occasion. A short briefing to the musicians in the band before the performance is all that the cantarist needs. The thrust of the *cantar* is social and political criticism. The main targets are politicians in power and their corrupt practices. The tone is satirical, but quite often it is virulent, harsh and strident, bordering on personal attack. As they express the anger and frustration of the powerless (Catholic) common man of Goa, they elicit an overwhelming response from the audience. *Cantaram* also criticise Goans for failing to be good Goans and good Catholics. The *cantaram* which open *Tiatr* performances currently are largely devoted to extolling the virtues of the Konkani language, reprimanding and scolding the Goans for neglecting their mother tongue, and making a fervent plea for recognition of Konkani as an official language by Parliament in New Delhi. Some *cantaram* are entirely humourous forming a part of the skits and comic routines which are also important elements of *Tiatr* performances.

The plays, generally speaking, are domestic melodramas (with a great deal of simulated physical violence a la Hindi film added) or soap operas (with a great deal of tear jerking material and sob stuff). There are two or three subplots in the manner of Victorian novels which may or may not converge in the end.

In the choice of themes and plots, as well as in treatment, presentation and acting, the main influence on *Tiatr* is that of the popular Hindi cinema. The 'serious reformers' referred to earlier, deplore this influence and would like *Tiatr* to be more naturalistic and 'socially relevant', like Marathi drama.

Theatrical devices such as costumes, sets and make-up are generally given short shift by *Tiatr* producers. *Khel Tiatrist*, however, pay more attention to these devices and especially to light and

sound effects. Competing with them, the *Tiatrist* are beginning to pay more attention to these devices. The efforts of *Tiatrist* and *Khel Tiatrist* in the area of theatrical devices are marked by a naivete and crudeness which have their own appeal.

The plots of *Tiatr* plays have generally championed the cause of the poor and the downtrodden, of the powerless against the powerful, of the mundkar (tenant) against the *bhatkar* (landlord). This might be considered a natural extension of the Christian ideal of compassion. In political terms, however, this is never extended to the conflict between the rulers and the ruled. Before 1961, *Tiatr* was never a theatre of political protest. *Tiatr* and *Tiatrist*, during the colonial rule, accepted the Portuguese rulers and the special benefits accruing from being citizens of Portuguese Goa. The period between the first and second world war was a period of growing fascism and isolationism for Portugal and its colonies. The Colonial Act passed by Salazar's government in 1930 was a regressive measure which made Goans second class citizens. It brought about a wave of protest and nationalism amongst the Goan intellectuals of Bombay. One does not, however, find any reflection of this in the world of *Tiatr*. For the majority of Goans in Goa and other places, a sense of peace and serenity prevailed; the key factors contributing to it were said to be "Fatima, *Fado* and Football".

The stance of *Tiatrist* was so pro-establishment in political terms, that during the period of escalating tensions between the Indian and Portuguese government in the 1950s, some prominent *Tiatrist* carried on anti-Indian propaganda in Bombay and there were instances of the Indian government having to expel some of them to Goa. Propagandists of Goa Radio under the Portuguese took full advantage of the talent of these and other popular artistes to broadcast skits and songs attacking the designs of the Government of India against 'Catholic Goa'.[38] Since the Liberation in 1961 things have changed in this respect. *Tiatr* now has a growing element of political protest as well as social protest. The cantarist who receive most applause are those who lampoon politics and politicians.

Where does *Tiatr* stand in the light of the two contrasting ideologies of essentialism and epochalism? If we look at its history, *Tiatr* began as an epochalist response to the traditional ritualistic performances such as *khel* and *zagor*. It was influenced by the cosmopolitan theatre world of the city of Bombay in the 1890s. It reflected the sensibility of the mobile personality of the Goan migrant. However, essentialism asserted itself through the distinct world view and self-image of the Goan Catholic. The appeal of *Tiatr* was essentialist and directed to the lower middle class-caste *Sudir* Goan Catholic. It did

not appeal either to elite Catholics or to the Goan Hindus. Currently this essentialism is expressed in the militant championing of the cause of Konkani. *Tiatr* is also popular, commercial theatre. In order to be successful commercially, it has to go along with the needs of the present hour. Innovative techniques and gimmicks are in a way epochalist strategies for survival. The popularity of *Khel Tiatr* (non-stop, which follows the sensational action-packed formula of Hindi films) is also an epochalist manifestation.

Structurally, the essentialist elements seem to be more strongly rooted. For instance, characters in *Tiatr* appear as types rather than as persons. Little attempt is made to deal with the psychological make-up of an individual. The father, the mother, the brothers, the wife, the children, the daughter-in-law, the son-in-law, the brother-in-law and other members of what appears to be an extended family (not unlike the Hindu joint family where each kin relationship entails certain formal responses and patterns of behaviour) are all types—they conform to an inherited traditional code of conduct and morality. Departure from this constitutes the dramatic element in the domestic melodramas. The same is true of characters in the larger social setting such as the landlord, the tenant, the priest, the doctor, the lawyer, the police officer, the policeman, the politician, the social worker, the new rich from the Gulf or from Africa, the shippies.

Both in the family dramas and the social dramas the conflict is between the powerful and the powerless and the sympathy is always for the latter. Depending on the playwright, the powerless, protagonist may win over the powerful, through long suffering, through intervention of fate or sometimes through fighting or he might suffer like Job and end up as a martyr for the sake of somebody else. In the basic conflict between Good and Evil which practically all *Tiatr* plays are concerned with, Evil is powerful and Good is powerless and weak. The ultimate moral victory of the Good over the Evil quite often appears to be arbitrary and serendipitous. Except for a short period when Souzalins' *Tiatr* based on biblical and religious themes was very popular with the Goan audiences (*Sat Dukhi*, a *Tiatr* depicting the seven shafts of pain and sorrow in The Virgin's life was played to capacity crowds in football stadia and village playgrounds all over the Old Conquest territories during the 1950s), we find the basic theme between Good and Evil, the Powerless and Powerful expressed in contemporary terms rather than in mythological terms.

In resolving conflicts, playwrights often depend on faith or a *deus ex machina* expressing perhaps a deep Roman Catholic belief in the efficacy of divine intervention and miracles, a belief counter to the idea of individual choice and psychological motivation as key fac-

tors in the unfolding of human drama. *Tiatr*, though set against the background of contemporary Goan society, thus reveals a world view which is essentially pre-modern and is essentialist partaking of the elements of the medieval Christian miracle and morality plays. In spite of its commercial modernity, the *Tiatr* still harks back to the stereotype village character impersonation of *zagor*.

*Tiatr* as popular entertainment has not much in common with the Italian operetta or opera. It resembles popular performances such as the Music Hall entertainment of 19th century London, Vaudeville of France or the Variety in the United States of the same period. The main difference is the presence of a play with a beginning, middle and end, within the framework of Musical Variety Entertainment. In a way, as genre, *Tiatr* seems to come closest to Brecht's theory and practice of Epic Theatre.

It would be more profitable to compare the origins and development of the Konkani language *Tiatr* with the development of the *Zarzuela* as it took place in the Philippines in various Philippine languages dialects, following the colonial model of the Spanish *Zarzuela*. The socio-economic conditions which triggered its development, the choice of plots and themes as well as the styles of presentation reveal a remarkable degree of similarity[39] This is, of course, not to suggest that there is any kind of direct influence of the one on the other. It does point out that a similar historical colonial experience underlines a cultural ethos which seems to bring about a parallel development of popular cultural expressions.

*Tiatr* is a dynamic performance genre. Its form and content constantly change in response to changes in popular taste as measured in commercial success. The traditional *Tiatr* with its star performers, currently seems to have become a somewhat vehicle. Khel *Tiatr* (nonstop) also has produced a number of commercial flops which try to follow the successful formula of sensational action-suspense melodramas. Perhaps the trend is toward integration of the improvisational comic sideshow material from the traditional *Tiatr* into the plots and themes of *Khel Tiatr's* direct dramatic format. The recent success of Jacob D'Souza (Prince Jacob, as he styles himself) is illustrative of this change. His approach can be contrasted with that of a traditional master of comic sideshow such as Jacinto Vaz, who even when he plays a character remains outside as a great comic—an eternal figure like Chaplin.

During the last twenty-five years, Goan society has undergone radical changes. Vatican II has liberalised the outlook of the Catholic Church. Political integration into the Indian Union has ended the isolation and stagnation of a colonial dependency. It also has brought

about feelings of frustration, felt more keenly by the traditional elites and the new rich migrant workers in the Gulf countries who feel that their home space is being taken over by outsiders. There are also signs of changes in Goan Ethos. Portuguese is no more a language of public discourse. Goans are realising that the Catholic Church is not a mere Portuguese or European phenomenon but a global institution with a large number of Catholics living in conditions of privation and exploitation in Third World countries. Some Goans have taken the trouble to go to the records of parish churches to trace and adopt their ancestral Hindu family names. Many more are choosing Sanskritic names for their children. Intercaste and interfaith marriages, though not commonplace, are being accepted. There are more Goan pilgrims visiting our Lady of Vailankani in Tamil Nadu than our Lady of Fatima in Portugal. *Fado* and Portuguese music as well as Latino-African rhythms of the 40s and 50s are fast fading. The Catholic Goan youths speak and practise the universal language of pop and rock. Football is still the most popular sport in Goa's villages, but cricket is also making inroads.

There are these signs of epochalist attitude which are balanced by a search for Goan identity and essentialist quest. The Konkani language, of course, is a key factor in defining Goan identity. It would be wrong to dismiss *Tiatr* as the outcome of cheap commercialisation. *Tiatr* is a genuine expression of popular culture which juxtaposes and balances the epochalist and essentialist values of Goan society.

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11

# *Withering Goan Hindu Folk Theatre Forms*

**Devendra Karapurkar***

As the monsoon recedes yearly, giving way to the October heat and chilly winter, it marks the new season of feasts and fairs, when Goa's folk theatre comes back to life. It entertains people and helps them recall their rich heritage. The performances are ancient and their peculiar feature is that though neither themes nor structure change, they are still popular in villages and, on feast days, beat all electronic media in popularity. From November to May-end, the itinerant groups which present and sustain the age-old theatre forms continue with a missionary zeal at all fairs, though rewards they reap are not at all enough to ensure a decent living. These groups consider their art traditional, coming down over the centuries, but for a number of years now, fresh blood has not been in evidence. At most, the odd new generation of a family which is not attracted to lucrative jobs joins its parents, but the virtual absence of new entrants has reduced the number of groups drastically.

The folk theatre groups of Goa, even though participating in annual festivals and contests of the Kala Academy, have remained amateurish and even, with changing times, refuse to become professional. The elites do not scoff at the folk performances and at some places are even their patrons. But they do not think in terms of helping make these performances contemporarily professional. States like Maharashtra and Karnataka have made splendid use of folk theatre to convey modern messages and thus ensured its rejuvenation and longevity. Writers like Girish Karnad (who is a most successful man

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*The author is the former Director of Information of the Goa government. This rare article in the local English press on an important but endangered part of Goan cultural tradition appeared in Sunday Navhind Times (Dec.11, 1994).*

today) have not only brought contemporarised folk forms to the urban upper classes, but also achieved success at the box office. In fact, Karnad has set new records in income and new trends in folk theatre. His two plays "*Hayavadan*" and "*Nagamandala*" linger in the popular memory and have evoked a great deal of interest abroad. Bengal too has been ahead in this field. The late Utpal Dutt and Badal Sarkar, by elevating folk traditions to the contemporary stage without modifying their structure, have helped immensely the survival of our Indian heritage. But, in Goa, folk theatre continues to sulk and the day does not seem so far off when it will fade away totally.

Goa's folk dramas are hilarious, humorous and enjoyable by all means in spite of some crude elements stuck to them. For example, women's roles are performed by men. They are ritualistic and confined to the temple pavilion. They apply so much upon faces specially thick talcum powder that looks so bad.

Among Goa's foremost folk theatre forms, known for centuries, is the *Zagor*. It focuses on a myriad stories. These include: a widow's complaint against her nephew who killed his uncle; a woman's complaint that her daughters have been kidnapped by a goldsmith's sons; a coquettish woman searching for her Don Juan; and a wife crying about her husband's liquor addiction. Then there is a story of Tendlo in search of a female companion and, of course, a handful of stories about government authorities, each having names like *parpati* (prajapati) and *nikhandar* and *havaldar*, who are all always smartly dressed full of brocades and with crowns on their heads.

*Zagor* present all sections of the populace, but the uniqueness in style of presentation is that groups of characters move within themselves. There is no coordination between stories and therefore there is no cohesive effect. Two young boys of a goldsmith's family kidnap a woman's daughters. Police lock them up. Then another weeping woman comes on stage and says that her nephew has killed her husband. (Most probably the uncle-nephew clash has been taken from the story of Lord Krishna and Kauns). Next comes a coquettish woman wearing a skirt and holding a colourful umbrella in search of her lover. Then comes a *Mahar* with broom, basket and bottle. What they say is hardly understood. So is their interconnection.

*Zagor* are performed by itinerant groups. They move from place to place, but only where there are their own established traditions. *Zagor* has its own music as all the actors dance on the stage. They dance to the accompaniment of musical instruments like *Mrudangam*, and *tal*, cymbals which create good effects of rhythm as well as melody. In the old days, *Zagor*, would continue through the

night, but nowadays *Zagor* present few characters and wind up early.

*Zagor*, despite its limitations, is very enjoyable and the Kala Academy has played a vital role in sustaining popular interest by organising annual contests. If improved upon by removing some of its crudities, *Zagor*, like *Nautanki* in northern India could attract a flood of Goan *afficianados* and tourists. And the artistes too would have work throughout the year with ample opportunity to improve their living and professional standards.

## *Perni Zagor*—A Blighted Form

Of all the forms of Goan folk theatre, *Perni Zagor* has passed through the worst vicissitudes for want of patronage. It is a form restricted to few families known as 'Perni' found in Molkornem and a few other places in Sanguem taluka. It is also the worst sufferer for want of new entrants. Perni who belong to the older generations can perform only with those of their young who cannot get jobs elsewhere. Their third compulsion is that they have been allotted lands by *Comunidades* and *Devasthans* for which they must perform.

*Perni Zagor* has not remained the same as of yore. The form has lost its old charm of presenting a complete story. Nowadays they also use masks as a result of which nobody knows whether the character on the *Mand* (public place used as stage) is Lord Shiva or Parvati, his consort. Nobody can understand their dialogue either because of the masks. Characters, whether Shiva or Parvati or some other come one by one and go off stage and people go home with totally blank faces. *Perni Zagor* is fading fast and will disappear unless someone with creative sensibilities undertakes research and revives the form.

## Ranmale—A Lively, Colourful Form

If proper encouragement is given to this form, it can become an experience of splendid colour and activity. *Ranmale* is an open-air drama primarily based on the *Ramayana*. It has three parts, the central part of which is when the *Ramayana* story is told. The second part is for the entertainment of children and consists of characters with masks of tigers, lions and other animals. Children watch their fights with awe and wonder. The third (and most important!) part is also entertainment, but with 'A' certificate, though children continue defying the stricture on viewing.

After the story of *Ramayana* and the masked animal act, all actors come together and dance holding a white cloth by its four corners. The accompanying song goes, *"Ago! Ago! Sakhu var bhag*

*lakdank vaita tevaham. Bhavojin tuka malear bolealam. Rupea tuka cholyek thaila"* (Ah! Sakhu look up at the attic while going to collect firewood. Your brother-in-law has called you there, as he wants to offer you a rupee for a blouse). This is only a sample, but at times vulgarity scales peaks which people enjoy avidly. A characteristic of this folk theatre form is that human beings replace the conventional (or should we say modern?) curtain. No sooner must a scene change say from Panchavati to Ashokvan, than all actors turn their backs to the audience and the human file is used as the 'curtain'. When the new scene is 'ready' the actors resume their performance.

## Kalo—Krishna and the Purana

*Kalo* actually means temple fair, but *Kalo* is also an open-air drama. *Kale* are of two types. One that is staged at night is called *Sankasur Kalo* and next day, in the afternoon, is staged a drama called *Govalan Kalo*. The latter is all *Gokul* atmosphere where *Krishna leela* are played. Lord Krishna teases the *Gopis* along with friends and then is punished by Yashoda. The *Sankasur Kalo* staged on the previous night presents a story from the *Purana* which shows prominently war between Gods and Asuras.

There is yet another form called *Dhashawatar* and it is presented by itinerant groups called Mochemodkar. Mochemad is a village in Sindhudurg district in Maharashtra. But it would not be correct to ignore this form because it is 'from Maharashtra' since historical records indicate, there were such groups also in Goa. Either Goa's groups fled and settled in Mochemad or the local groups have given up the tradition. Whatever it be, *Dhashawatar* forms part of our heritage and unless sustained interest in this form is maintained, our study cannot be complete.

Mochemodkar choose any interesting (but not too lengthy) story from Maharashtra or from the Ramayana and present it to the audience. People enjoy this. But what they do enjoy more, going into peals of laughter, is when two actors express their personal animosity or grievance on stage, mid-performance. Envisage this. The audience is holding its breath anticipating the battle between Jarasandha and Bhima and Lord Krishna is worried about the ignorance of Bhima about the only way in which Jarasandha can be killed. At that very moment, to everyone's surprise, going counter to the epic, Jarasandha thunders at Bhima: "I am not going to be killed today! On the contrary, I will trash you!" And he immediately reclines on his mace with a 30 Number bidi in his mouth. After a long puff, he asks Bhima: "Who ate my share of mackerel from the frying pan?" And at once, he strikes Bhima who collapses flat on the ground. Such epi-

sodes are purposefully interspersed to provide relief to audiences from serious scenes like the battle of Bhima with Jarasandha.

Mochemodkar too are a fading folk theatre genre. Their performances have become rare. They face the twin challenge of mighty electronic media and a fully developed modern stage.

This beautiful land is blessed with half a dozen folk forms entertaining people every year during fairs and festivals. Some of them like *Perni Zagor* are disappearing. *Zagor* is an impressive form and can be further improved to make it attractive even to tourists by raising it to professional commercial standards.

Similarly, the best available form is *Ranmale*, which, if encouraged properly can attract even the younger generation from schools and colleges and make the form an effective medium to push through the messages of the modern world. The Kala Academy can definitely play a strategic role in rejuvenating these forms to suit the tastes of modern audiences without destroying its inherited intrinsic structure and flavour.

12

# *Unchanging Plight of the Original Goans*

**Anita Haladi***

They are known as *Mull Goenkar*—literally, 'Root Goans'. They are ubiquitous in Goa, wherever one sees manual labour going on—be it in the fields, on road construction sites, in quarries or in the janitors and load-carrying 'departments' of private commercial firms. They are cannon fodder for politicians across the spectrum, trucked like cattle to rallies and paraded as 'strength' in morchas. And though they are the 'root' or original Goans, they are the most wretched of the Goan earth.

Dispossessed of land centuries ago, they lived as bonded labour and serfs well into the twentieth century. After the Liberation of Goa, the Tenancy Act gave them the right to land they tilled, but their lack of resources soon made cultivation impossible. After 33 years of democracy, though 30 percent of the population according to their own estimates and 20 by the government's, basic demands raised decades ago are yet to be met. Most indicative of their 'democratic strength', of course, is their representation in the State Legislature: a mere ten percent after the November 1989 elections and twelve and a half after the recent November 1994 polls.

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**One of the few summaries of the antecedents and needs of the* Gavde-Kunbi, *this is a revised and updated version of a paper presented at a seminar on 'Dams and Other Major Projects—Impact on and Response of Indigenous People' in April 1988. Ms Haladi who then worked with Goa Research Institute for Development, Panjim, is now a lecturer in Economics at a Goa college.*

## The Origins of these Goans

It has now been conclusively established that the *Gavde* were the first settlers in Goa. Explanations about their origins are varied. According to one, the name *Gavda* derives from their place of origin—*Gavda Desh* in East Bengal. The etymology of the name-word, according to others—in particular, some linguists—can be traced to the word '*Ganv*', which means village. Yet another ascribes the source to a colloquial language once spoken by this community which is now extinct. (The *Gavde* in Goa speak Konkani.)

According to the Gazetteer of the erstwhile Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, 1979, the *Gavde* belong to the Astroid race and are believed to have migrated from Southeast Asia through Assam, Orissa and Bengal to Kerala, Malabar and Goa. Though the time of their migration to Goa is uncertain, it is clear that the *Gavde* were the first to settle in Goa even before the Aryans and Dravidians. The Gazetteer also states that the *Gavde* were responsible for the introduction of crops such as rice, coconut, arecanut, plantains, black pepper, etc. to this region.

The *Gavde* in Goa today subscribe to the view that they have acquired the community name as they stay in remote villages where their main occupation has always been agriculture. They ascribe the origin of the appellation to the word *Ganv* and claim that they migrated to Goa from Karnataka. While the Gazetteer claims that they were chiefly employed as palanquin bearers, the *Gavde* themselves assert that their chief occupation is and always has been agriculture. Some of them are engaged in fishing or manufacturing salt, the latter known as *Mitt Gavde*.

The *Gavde* now, are divided into three main sub-groups: the Hindu, the Nav-Hindu, and the Christian. After the invasion by Aryans, they adopted Hinduism as their religion, but continued their own forms of worship and religious rituals and never really adopted idol worship. During the Portuguese regime in Goa, some of them, as the Gazetteer notes, were forcibly converted to Christianity in the 17th Century. Subsequently, in 1928, some of them were reconverted to Hinduism by a religious leader called Masurker Maharaj. These reconvertees, not accepted by either the Hindus or the Christians, maintain a separate identity and are called *Nav-Hindu Gavde*.

These people, approximately 300,000 by our estimates, are divided thus: (a) the Hindu *Gavde*, dispersed in the *Nova Conquistas*, a predominately Hindu area; (b) the *Nav-Hindu Gavde*, who as a result of non-acceptance, stay in separate areas called *mands*; and (c) the Christian *Gavde*, who are dispersed in the *Velhas Conquistas*, a

predominantly Christian area. The Christian *Gavde* are also known as *Kunbi*. The *Gavde*, spread over remote villages, earlier lived in relative isolation. However, rapid urbanisation has led to some amount of inter-mingling between the *Gavde* and the other communities. Yet, the *Gavde* continue to stay together, segregated from the rest of society, and to maintain a distinct identity.

## The Struggle for Recognition

In the post-Liberation period, these communities have been making attempts to get themselves recognised by the Government of India as Scheduled Tribes, and thus to avail of benefits safeguarded by the country's Constitution for tribals. Their attempts aim at making the Indian Union aware of their plight and to convince it that the socio-economic amelioration of the community depends on their statutory recognition as tribals.

Like tribals elsewhere, this community has fallen victim to the development programmes of non-tribals and the State. Rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, deforestation, land acquisition by government departments (like the Forest Department)—and now, tourism which has been declared an industry in Goa—have been aggravating the already existing land alienation and its related problems.

Though the *Gavde* have been struggling to get themselves notified as Scheduled Tribes, the Government of Goa issued a notification in 1980 declaring four communities—the *Gavde* and *Kunbi*, besides *Velip* and *Dhangar*—as "Other Backward Classes" (OBCs). The government estimated the total population of these communities to be around 200,000. These communities have been notified OBCs on the criterion of overall socio-economic backwardness.

In many other Indian states, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population comprises nearly 20 percent of the total population. However, in Goa their population is as low as around two percent, whereas that of the OBCs is 20 percent.

## Unique, Syncretic Cultural Tradition

The *Gavde* who first came to Goa, worshipped nature. A Gavda family keeps a stone and a coconut in a hole in the wall. This shrine is called *puri*. *Gavde* worship the *puri*, and also perform certain religious rites to appease the spirits in whom they believe. The community believes in ghosts and a caretaker who is believed to reside in a particular tree. They believe that the caretaker, called *devchar*,

moves around at nights with a light to keep an eye on the village and protects them from evil. Each village has its own *devchar* and whenever a person is ill, he is offered a chicken, a special bread and rice. They also worship trees and cattle.

Even today, the *Gavde* are neither fully Hindu nor Catholic. They adopted Hinduism and some forms of Hindu worship or Christianity and Christian forms of worship, but have retained their traditional forms of worship.

The Hindu *Gavde* worship Bali and Bhima. Many of them, particularly in the Canacona taluka, worship Mallikarjuna. The family deities of the *Gavde* of Chimbel are, Mhalasa, Kamakshi, Betal, Shivaikar, Folkar, Shantadurga, Mallikarjuna, Mahadev, Boma, Kamaleshwari, Nagueshi and Laharai. The family deities of the *Nav-Hindu Gavde* are Ravalnath, Mallikarjuna, Betal, Mahadev, Kamakshi, Nava Durga, Mahalakshmi, Chamundi and Shantadurga. The Hindu *Gavde* do not know either the Ramayana or Mahabharata and do not particularly follow the Upanishads. They perform ceremonies like Tulsi Puja and, on Bali Pratipada, they worship cattle.

The Christian *Gavde* visit Hindu temples in addition to observing most of the Christian rituals. A common sight in the house of a Christian Gavda is a *tulsi vrindavan* next to a cross. The Christian *Gavde* too believe in ghosts and spirits and they perform ceremonies to appease them similar to those of the Hindu Gavda. Thus, one can say that the *Gavde* have maintained their unique forms of worship which cannot be defined as essentially Hindu or Christian.

The Hindu *Gavde* burn or bury their dead. The Catholic *Gavde* bury theirs. To pacify the deceased, they take '*prasad*' from the village deity. A copper plate is handed over to the *Gurav* (priest) who praises the soul and declares that the soul has entered the copper plate. This plate is then handed over to the head of the family of the deceased. The plate called *Dama* is then worshipped every amavasya (no-moon day).

Most *Gavde* follow a traditional ritual following a death in the family. As soon as a death occurs, a messenger is sent to inform the relatives of the event. The relatives then come weeping and crying to the house of the deceased. After the body is taken to the cemetery or crematorium, the daughters of the dead person leave the house. The sons and daughters-in-law stay behind. A lamp is lit. On the third day following the death, after bathing, the family visit the village witch-doctor who reveals the reason for the demise. He is believed to maintain contact with the dead person. On the fourth day, the men shave and take food to the cemetery, to the dead man. The

relatives of the dead return with bidi, betelnut and oil. This oil is continuously poured into the lamp. The relatives then return to their respective homes. On the twelfth day, the relatives and people attending the funeral are invited for a meal which consists of everything the dead person was fond of. After the meal is over, the witch-doctor is brought to the house to disclose the reasons for the passing away, whether the dead person will come to the rescue of his family when faced with hardships, and to suggest remedies, if any. This custom is practised by the *Gavde* even today.

The inter-relationships between *Gavde* are characterised by strict monogamy, early marriage, selection of partners by parents and no courtship. Relationships outside marriage are not tolerated. Illegitimacy called *pottache* or *caprache* is a taboo and illegitimate children are treated as outcastes.

There are special rituals for marriage, birth, death, etc. which do not exist among the Hindus or Christians. Consultations with witch-doctors prevail even now. Every village has its *Gauncar* or *Zolmi* who performs all the religious rites in the village. The *Gauncar* is consulted during each event, be it marriage, death or any internal feud. A meeting called *Bousar* is arranged at nights to discuss problems and find solutions. The verdict of the Gauncar is final.

The *Gavde* perform folk dances called *Zagor*, *Dhalo* and *Fugdi*. The festivals celebrated by the *Gavde* are *Intruz* and *Shigmo*. Each of the religious sub-groups celebrates these festivals separately, but in the same manner.

The Gavda community believes in mythological traditions to explain their origin. They derive their peculiar culture from these beliefs. Their dress, customs, rituals, music, dance and songs all suggest that a strong bond of cultural unity prevails among all the sub-groups, even though they are now formally divided.

## Ages of Backwardness

Even cursory observation reveals that the *Gavde* are socio-economically backward. They continue to be the hard core of the unskilled labour force in Goa, engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Though the *Gavde* may have originally been the owners of land, the development of formal ownership patterns led to the ownership rights ultimately being transferred to the upper caste landlords or '*bhatkar*' as they are known in Goa, which resulted in the deprivation of natural ownership rights to the *Gavde*.*

These bhatkar belonged to the economically powerful classes

and gradually the *Gavde* became mild forced labourers, cultivating the land of the bhatkar. Very often, they had to suffer the ignominy of bearing the surname of the bhatkar for whom they worked, so as to distinguish themselves from others. They were 'free' to seek employment elsewhere during the non-agricultural seasons, but their services were always reserved for the bhatkar whenever he needed them. They were often forced to work for very meagre wages.

In the early forties, mining became an important activity that required a huge amount of labour. The *Gavde* then provided cheap labour and also an opportunity for the contractors (a majority of them belonging to the same community), to exploit them. The *Gavde* began working in mines in huge numbers in inhuman conditions with absolutely no protection against accident. The mine owners and the contractors soon amassed capital and decided to mechanise mining operations in order to increase production. The services of the *Gavde* were immediately dispensed with, without any compensation. They had to return to their huts with tuberculosis and other diseases which resulted from working endlessly in the inhuman conditions.

After the Liberation, the government undertook several programmes to improve infrastructural facilities in order to spur the development of industries. *Gavde* were once again employed at road and building construction sites. Here too, being unskilled and unorganised, they became victims of contractors who paid them very little. The same labour contractors have now dispensed with the services of the *Gavde* since cheaper labour has become available, thanks to the influx of labourers from the other parts of India.

The *Gavde* who worked as cultivators within their villages (this land was owned either by private landlords or by the *gaonkari-comunidade*), earlier cultivated land collectively. They had to pay half the produce to the landlords and the rest was shared amongst themselves. The local government takes pride in the post-Liberation enactment of the Tenancy Act. However, this law has done more harm than good to the *Gavde*.

The landlords were responsible earlier for the upkeep and maintenance of the farms. The rent, under the Act, was reduced and fixed at one sixth of the produce, but the responsibility of maintenance and upkeep was shifted from the landlords to the *Gavde*. The Tenancy Act saw the *Gavde* individually asserting tenancy rights, which led to the gradual disappearance of collective cultivation. Now, each individual tenant has to hire labour to cultivate his farm. They cannot afford the maintenance costs and, consequently, a majority of their farms have become infertile. All this has made agriculture uneconomical for the *Gavde* and they are being forced to live at subsis-

tence level due to lack of other well-paying employment opportunities.

The *Gavde* being occupied with cultivation or manual labour for almost all their lives, have had very little time to develop socially too. The educational opportunities provided by the State, have done very little to change the situation. Forced to live at subsistence level, with little or no means of livelihood, the school drop out rate among *Gavde* is very high. Very few of them have managed to obtain their secondary school certificate (SSC). Today, the total number of professionals among them are so few that they give the lie to the claims of 'change' that the educational system is supposed to enable them attain.

When the first post-Liberation advisory council to the Union government was formed, the *Gavde* were not represented. They made an appeal to the authorities, demanding their inclusion, but failed to gain attention.

Associations such as *Gomantak Gavda Yuvak Parishad*, *Gavda Vikas Mandal*, etc., were formed to organise the *Gavde* in order to address the problem. Subsequently, several memorandums were submitted, but failed to create the necessary impact. In 1963, some contractors belonging to the same community, made counter representations which were challenged by a mammoth gathering of 8,000 *Gavde* from all over Goa. The associations demanded that the *Gavde/ Kunbi* (and *Velips*) be declared as a tribe and all the benefits provided by the Constitution be made available to them. However, the Constitution states that a community which either practices or preaches Christianity cannot be declared as a tribe and the *Gavde* failed to get themselves notified as tribes under the Constitution. The *Gavde* do not consider this ruling fair as they maintain that they are neither Hindus or Christians and that the government should consider their socio-economic backwardness as a criterion for declaring them a tribe.

They have been persistent since in their efforts to secure a notification as a Scheduled Tribe. In October 1973, the *Gomantak Gavda Yuvak Sangh*, under the leadership of Guru Shirodkar submitted a memorandum to the then chief minister, Shashikala Kakodkar, for immediate notification of the community as a Scheduled Tribe. In

**EDITOR'S NOTE: The Gavda alienation from the land, according to some sources, was primarily caused by the formation of* gaonkari, *the village communities formed by higher castes who came to Goa after the original settlers and staked land ownership rights to the virtual exclusion of the lower 'conquered' castes. Individual* bhatkar *ownership is believed to have come later.*

January 1975, the Study Group of the Parliamentary Committee for Scheduled Castes and Tribes visited Goa, and a memorandum was submitted to Morarji Desai (when he was the prime minister) and to Jagjivan Ram, but no action was taken. In 1977 a group called *Gavda Samajachea Cholwol* was formed. This group prepared a Charter of Demands which included the demand for notifying the community as a Scheduled Tribe. During the agitation which followed, the different associations decided to come together and in 1979, the *Gavda/Kunbi/Velip/Dhangar* (GKVD) Federation was formed in order to coordinate the efforts of all the associations fighting for the rights of the *Gavde*. (They also included the *Velip* and *Dhangar* communities which were facing similar problems.) Under the guidance of Fr Joachim Fernandes, they managed to bring together most of the groups which were earlier divided on religious grounds. Realising that a consolidation of efforts was necessary to solve their common problems, the Federation has held several meetings and seminars in order to sensitise the community and to organise them. During these meetings, they have discussed issues like: (a) How to save the present economy of the community; (b) Political status of the community at Panchayat level; (c) Effects of the religious system; (d) How to unite the community; etc.

In 1980, a memorandum was given to the Mandal Commission for consideration. The late B.P. Mandal regretted the plight of the *Gavde* following which, the Goa government issued the earlier mentioned notification declaring the community as an 'Other Backward Class'. The government has since then reserved two percent posts in government offices and has declared a five percent reservation in all technical and professional educational institutions for them.

The GKVD Federation has not yet succeeded in uniting the *Gavde*. The main reason for their disunity stems from religious and communal differences—factors that have also been used by the politicians to sharpen divisions among them. The federation, in an attempt to wipe out religious differences, formed an action committee which has representatives from all the groups, but unity still seems a distant goal. The federation has also been making attempts to draw the government's attention to the problems of the community.

## The V.P. Gaonkar Commission

In the face of continuing agitation by the *Gavde*, the Goa government appointed the Vasu Paik Gaonkar Committee in 1986, to review the situation and suggest measures for their socio-economic amelioration. The committee visited the states of West Bengal, Bihar

and Rajasthan and studied the nature and extent of benefits offered to the OBCs there. Based on these observations, the committee formulated a report containing suggestions for Goa. This report was submitted in 1987, but the Government of Goa is yet to approve it. Thus, no positive changes have resulted.

The major recommendations of the V.P. Gaonkar Committee were:

- The Constitution of India has provided clauses safeguarding the interest of the SC/STs under Articles 341 and 342. No such safeguards are provided for OBCs. Considering the demographic conditions of Goa, job reservations to the tune of at least 20 percent should be adopted as a policy for OBCs. Also, 20 percent of the seats should be reserved for OBCs in all professional courses such as MBBS, BDS, Pharmacy, etc.

- All SC, ST and OBC students should be exempted from paying fees for an educational/profesional course at any level. The fees that are compulsory in nature may be paid by the government in case of private educational institutions. The income criterion should be applied here. In order to prevent dropping out of girl students, incentives should be provided to the parents by way of financial assistance.

- Residential hostels for SC, ST and OBC boys and girls studying upto SSC should be provided, one each in North and South Goa in addition to one more centrally located residential hostel. These may be run entirely by the government and income may be the only criteria for admission.

- Medical and health centres should be opened in SC/ST/OBC-dominant areas. The number of potential beneficiaries should not be the only criterion.

- The scope of public housing schemes should be extended so that OBCs are covered by the schemes which are implemented only for SCs and STs at present.

- A 'cooperative corporation' should be set up on the lines of the one functioning in Rajasthan covering STs and OBCs. In every industrial estate, five percent of sheds/tenements should be reserved for the SC/ST/OBCs.

- Land belonging to the comunidades/government should be given on lease basis to the SC/ST/OBCs for cultivation.

- Five percent of permits for public transport vehicles including buses, taxies, rickshaws, should be reserved for OBCs.

The government has yet to approve these recommendations—apparently fearing that the demand for 20 percent reservations is exaggerated. The government also gives excuses for non-implementation stating that the exact number of OBCs is not available. It has been planning to conduct a survey for the last few years, but has not yet done it.

## GKVD Federation's Demands

The *Gavde* have not benefitted from the present nominal reservation policy of the government. Only about ten percent of them have completed education upto SSC. The number of drop-outs in this community tends to be very high. Those opting for technical education (in ITIs) are faced with unemployment. There are almost no graduates, doctors or engineers from this community. Agriculture has become uneconomical and the lack of other employment opportunities has left them with very little choice. There is a fear among them that their socio-economic condition will deteriorate further if no action is taken by the government.

Though there are MLAs from this community, the federation says that they are not true representatives. Efforts to unite the community are thwarted by communal tensions provoked by religious heads and politicians. Their dream of attaining a higher socio-economic-political status seems distant. The federation feels that if the community is not notified as a Scheduled Tribe, things will remain as they are or even worsen.

The GKVD Federation has drawn a charter of demands which it feels can bring some relief. These include:

- Immediate implementation of the V.P. Gaonkar Report if the government persists with the policy which declared them as OBCs or declaration of the *Gavda*, *Kunbi*, *Velip* and *Dhangars* as Scheduled Tribes.

• Approval and financing of the socio-economic-educational projects proposed and submitted to the government by the federation. Subsidised loans on priority for self employment and financial assistance for training.

• Reservation of 25 percent government jobs for these communities. 25 percent of seats to be reserved for the students from these communities in educational institutions; scholarships and free hostel facilities to be provided.

• Legislation in favour of the community where kumeri cultivation is carried out and where land has been encroached upon by other communities. Land for the landless agricultural labourers and priority for OBCs in all schemes undertaken by the Rural Development Agency. Also, agricultural loan facilities to be extended to the communities.

• Representation to the office bearers of the Federation on the following state committees: Education; Provedoria; Sports Council; ITI; free legal aid; etc.

## Land Problems Faced by the Community

The government is constructing an electronic city in an area predominantly occupied by this community. The government acquired land (where paddy was cultivated by the community) in Verna and Quelossim. The federation sent a memorandum to the government objecting to this land acquisition plan, but to no avail.

The government has already acquired land predominantly occupied and cultivated by the community in many other regions (for example to construct the National Institute of Oceanography at Dona Paula, to construct the Goa Medical College and Goa University at Bambolim, to construct the Ciba Geigy plant in Corlim and to construct roads in Miramar, etc.). Thanks to this, the community has faced displacement. The compensation offered was meagre and a majority of it was given to the landlords instead of the *Gavde* (who were tenants). Industries and roads are constructed in areas where the community is cultivating paddy and compensation offered has been low.

Due to the construction of the Selaulim Dam a large number of *Gavde*, *Kunbi* and *Velip* were displaced with very little compensa-

tion and are facing rehabilitation problems. Huge areas of land have been claimed by the forest department. This too has led to increased displacement of the community. Mining rejects dumped on hill tops are washing into the paddy fields cultivated by the community and thereby damaging them. The mine owners are also claiming land belonging to the *Gavde* for afforestation.

The community is being deprived of its source of income (forests/agricultural land) and if no alternatives are offered, the federation fears that anti-social activity as a means of survival will be the inevitable outcome.

## Power, but no Solutions in Sight

The legislative assembly elected for the term 1989-94 saw two members of the *Gavda-Kunbi* community in the State Cabinet during the Progressive Democratic Front's regime. One, Kashinath Jhalmi, was a powerful minister handling important portfolios and the other, Luis Alex Cardozo looked after social welfare. Yet neither did much for or moved the government towards alleviating the problems of the *Gavde-Kunbi-Velip* till the ill-fated government collapsed.

After the several changes that took place and Wilfred de Souza became the chief minister, Vassu Paik Gaonkar, author of the V.P. Gaonkar Commission Report became not only minister holding the welfare portfolio but also, for almost one year, de facto No.2 in the State Cabinet. But he too was unable or unwilling to push the cause of the *Gavde-Kunbi-Velip*.

Prior to the November 1994 elections, the GKVD leadership threw in its lot with the North Indian Bahujan Samaj Party, but came a cropper in the polls. Mr Gaonkar himself lost his seat, ending a long but virtually useless tenure in the legislature. Antonio Gaonkar, leader of the *Mull Goenkarancho Ekvott* toppled the Christian Brahmin stalwart, Francisco Sardinha in the Gavda-dominated Curtorim constituency, but finds himself marginalised. Of the four others from the community who succeeded at the polls, Mr Cardozo and Krishna Kuttikar are in the ruling party, the Congress (I), but past performances of this party's *Gavde-Kunbi* members promise little. Dr Jhalmi and Prakash *Velip* find themselves in the Opposition once again.

Things in 'the world above' change, but the plight of the *Gavde*, the original Goans seems ever to remain the same...

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# *Paradoxes of Tourism in Goa*

**David Wilson***

There have been tourists in Goa (India) since the 60s. Initially the area was renowned as a haven for Western hippies and low-budget travelers, although in recent years tourism has expanded to cater for the charter-package and domestic markets. In addition, there are a small number of international hotels as Goa acquires a reputation as the Riviera of the Indian subcontinent. There is a well-organised local anti-tourism lobby which argues that a more appropriate comparison is to Benidorm and which has been remarkably successful in publicising the destructive nature of Goan tourism in both academic publications and the international press. The most striking features of the industry center on two main paradoxes, one of which contrasts the enthusiasm of most Western (or international) tourists against a number of serious grounds for complaint, and another which juxtaposes the dismay of the local objectors against the welcome given by many Goans themselves to both tourists and tourism. It is argued that there are aspects of tourism in Goa which are perceived as attractive, both from the point of view of the guests as well as their hosts, and that these must be taken into account in order to reach a balanced view of the costs and benefits of tourism in Goa. Notwithstanding this, Goa does face serious problems, not inherent in tourism *per se* but rather in the implementation and enforcement of planning regulations and the choice of tourism development policies.

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The author spent 4 weeks conducting this preliminary survey of tourism in North Goa over the New Year period 1994-95 as a precursor to further planned research in the area. The paper is ethnographic in orientation and utilises a research methodology based on participant observation and informal interviews. The author was assisted in Goa by several people, including a professional colleague through whom he met a number of regular long-stay visitors and their Goan friends. Information gained from conversations with many other foreign tourists and local inhabitants (not all involved in tourism), along with reports from the local English language newspapers (a well-informed, yet critical source of information), was cross-checked in more detailed discussions with these knowledgeable expatriate and Goan informants. Conflicting or alternative opinions have been reported wherever they were found. The author was primarily concerned to present the view from "below", the perceptions of ordinary tourists and Goans rather than that of tourism officials, government bureaucrats, or local politicians in the limited time available, and so these latter "voices" are absent except where they can be gleaned from published sources.

## Tourism Paradoxes

*The Guest:*

Simply stated, this first paradox asks why the majority of international tourists are so enthusiastic about Goa in spite of the fact that there are aspects of the tourism experience which, if found in Europe or other developed countries, would constitute serious grounds for complaint.

India can come as a shock to those unaccustomed to the ways of the subcontinent. The most frequent complaints concerned the litter and garbage found on the beaches and elsewhere, the poor standards of hygiene in many of the restaurants, the primitive toilet facilities in most of the roadside bars, and the complete absence of sanitation on the beaches. For example, on the 8 km stretch of beach between Baga and Aguada in Goa, there were approximately 120 beach bars (locally known as "shacks", all serving food as well as drinks), but not a single toilet between them. There were three options available for dealing with this problem: going back to the hotel which could be some distance away, using the bushes behind the beach (where the wells from which the shacks drew their water are located), or going in the sea. Throughout the day men could be seen urinating along the top of the beach without even seeking the privacy of undergrowth.

Another common criticism was rapidly rising prices, especially for accommodation which some regular visitors said had doubled over the last couple of years, and also for taxis, the drivers of which were accused of greed and of forming price cartels on the stands outside the main hotels. Other causes of complaint included traffic congestion, the danger of walking along narrow, busy roads without the protection of pavements, lack of nightlife, the sporadic electricity supplies, and anxieties over the use of child labour either for beach vending or in the kitchens of the beach shacks. Some up-market tourists lamented the general lack of sophistication, particularly the lack of good restaurants and hot baths, and could not wait to get back to Europe. Further, a few young travellers were encountered who disliked the drug and rave scene, and who would have preferred more local music, some "decent" dance music instead of the pounding techno-house, and places where they could enjoy a "civilised" drink and conversation in the evenings.

However, such complaints which elsewhere might have led to a total denunciation of the resort seemed to be conveniently overlooked or excused in most tourists' assessment of the overall quality of their experience of Goa. Evidence for this was to be found in the high percentage of repeat visitors encountered, the large numbers who had been persuaded to come to Goa on the recommendation of friends, and still others who were quite adamant in their desire to return the following year. A number of independent charter tourists were even booking accommodation for their return visits before they left. Goa clearly offers powerful attractions and incentives to tourists, and these seem to fall into two main categories. First, there were positive features such as the near perfect climate in December and January (25°-30°C, cloudless skies, relatively low humidity), cheap accommodation, food and drink, an enjoyable beach scene, friendly local people, and a general lack of harassment. Several female tourists reported that they found Goa to be one of the safest places they had ever visited, even in comparison to the Mediterranean as well as other long-haul destinations such as the Caribbean or the Far East. These features in themselves were sufficient to convert most tourists encountered into enthusiastic advocates.

In addition, for the young, low-budget travellers, the ready availability of drugs, a permissive local attitude towards this in spite of dire public warnings of imprisonment, and the regular moonlight parties held on the beaches and in the surrounding hills, constituted an additional subset of positive experiences. Although some of the older travellers said that their days may be numbered as tourism development forces them to move progressively further north, and

there was talk of the search for "New Goas" elsewhere in India, the general feeling was that there was nowhere else on the subcontinent which came close to providing the atmosphere and environment that they found so congenial in Goa.

Another factor which may help account for this curious ability to ignore the serious criticisms outlined above concerns visitors' expectations of India. They anticipate that services and facilities will be bad. After all, dirt, poverty, disease, time-consuming bureaucracy, and general chaos are all part of the common foreign perception of daily life in India. This view is encapsulated in the following comments of a travel writer.

> The picture that the average tourist has in mind's eye is a country of extreme poverty, filth, beggars, poor accommodation and food on which he is apt to become ill. A visit to India is considered more as a duty than a pleasurable experience (1991:248).

In other words, people do not go to India looking for "paradise". Many tourists found their actual stay in Goa to be far less stressful than they had expected and frequently expressed surprise at how relaxed and at ease they felt. This contrasts dramatically with destinations such as the Caribbean, where paradise imagery is the prime marketing strategy and where disillusionment is common as tourists discover the reality of life in Third World countries with serious poverty, high rates of unemployment and crime, and where they find a threatening degree of harassment on the beaches and on the streets (Wilson 1996a:94-97). A more extreme version of this argument is that some visitors seem to go to India with a positive desire for such experiences, the journey itself a challenge to be met and overcome. To survive such self-imposed difficulties seemed an important goal in itself for many low-budget travellers and several times people made statements to the effect that "I'm glad I made that journey, but I would never do it again". The journeys referred to were usually long-distance travel across India on local buses or trains, and were frequently accompanied by dire tales of hardships and privation.

One frequent comment from tourists was that the Goan people were warmer and more welcoming of international tourists than they had expected and more so than elsewhere in India. Guidebook writers such as Turner have also noted this:

> In spite of their varying ancestry (and religious beliefs) there is undoubtedly a Goan identity of attitude, which expresses itself in a relaxed view of life and a generally laid-back manner, which strangers find most appealing (1994:19).

Another comment:

> Despite more than three decades of "liberation" from Portuguese colonial rule, Roman Catholicism remains the predominant religion, skirts far outnumber saris, and the people display an easy-going tropical indulgence, humour and civility which you'll find hard to beat (Crowther, Raj, Wheeler, Finlay and Thomas 1993:807).

And yet again:

> The Goan philosophy of live and let live means tolerance towards those who might be thought awkward members of stricter societies, and at the same time the young, whether hippy or not, who come to Goa...find there the exotic strangeness of Asia accompanied by the reassuring familiarity of those aspects of Goan life that are European in origin (Richards 1993:130-31).

So one explanation for the friendly welcome that most tourists experience resides in the nature of Goan society itself, especially its long Portuguese associations and the extensive spread of Catholicism through, the local population. Goa was a Portuguese colony for 451 years (1510-1961) and, in spite of its occasional brutality, local people themselves view their Portuguese legacy in surprisingly positive terms. There are few Portuguese left in Goa and there was little miscegenation between the colonists and the colonised, the large number of Portuguese surnames having been acquired on their mainly enforced conversion to Catholicism. Portugal is no longer a significant player on the local stage, and even the language is rapidly dying out, being replaced with English as the main international language. Notwithstanding this, there had been over the years:

> ...a great deal of interaction between the indigenous and alien cultures, which is reflected in art and architecture, language and literature, and various other aspects of culture. This enriched the cultural traditions of the Goans and strengthened their sense of identity (Anthropological Survey of India 1993:xiv).

Mascarenhas-Keys also comments on the impact of Western culture:

> ...which was adopted by Catholic Goans under pressure from colonial policy and in some cases voluntarily, and is characterised by Christian first names and Portuguese surnames, dress, diet, music, education and language. The position of women changed in a number of ways, for instance in the late age of marriage, celibacy, entry to re-

ligious orders to become nuns and improved property rights (1994:151).

All of which seems to confirm the view that the Portuguese legacy has provided a wide range of identifications with Europeans which are quite different from elsewhere in India. A number of Catholic Goans claimed that the local Hindu population has absorbed some of these qualities as well, and even the Anthropological Survey of India notes these differences from other parts of India:

Goa has also been acclaimed as an example of communal harmony, of the co-existence of various faiths and their institutional manifestations. There are people who observe [both] the Hindu and Christian rituals. The incidence of inter-community marriages across religious barriers is on the increase (1993:xvii).

There is also a long history of Goans migrating overseas for work (Mascarenhas-Keyes 1994:152-155) and even today many Goan families have members working abroad. Perhaps such knowledge of, and connections with, the wider world also contribute to the relatively cosmopolitan atmosphere found in Goa. The combined effect of all these factors is to make the culture clash between Goan and Westerner less traumatic than might otherwise have been the case. The positive reinterpretation of their colonial past seems to have prevented the growth of the sort of racial resentments which are common throughout the Caribbean. Nor did there seem to be any of the confusion between memories of colonial servility and ideas of customer service which also generate tension and hostility between local inhabitants and tourists in the West Indies.

*The Host:*

Simply stated, this second paradox asks why tourism development has been so strongly condemned in Goa in spite of the fact that its economic benefits are spread widely through the local population, many of whom seem to welcome tourism and tourists.

The adverse effects of tourism have been publicised in Goa by the Goa Foundation (Ecoforum 1993:170-194), the Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz or Vigilant Goan's Army (Srisang 1987; Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz 1991; Lea 1993), a local women's collective known as the Bailancho Saad (1993), and by other Indian observers (Noronha 1994). Reports on the situation in Goa have been disseminated by Tourism Concern (Badger 1993) and the Ecumenical Council on Third World Tourism (O'Grady 1990:55). The horrors of Goan tourism have also been ventilated in the British Press (Lees 1995;

Nicholson-Lord 1993, 1995) and on British TV (BBC 1995; see also Anderson 1995). The main accusations concern the overdevelopment of the coastal strip, flaunting of planning regulations, especially those forbidding construction within 200 m of the high tide line, danger of exhausting the underground aquifers, preferential access to scarce water supplies by the hotels, environmental degradation including destruction of sand dunes and the pollution of seawater by hotel sewage, dumping of garbage, removal of beach sand for construction purposes, restricting access for local inhabitants to beaches, intimidation of villagers out of their homes as property developers attempt to buy up the remaining coastal strips, objections to nudity, drugs and moonlight parties held by the "hippies" (a term still used in Goa to refer to low-budget travellers and young backpackers), allegations of increasing prostitution and pedophile activity, and the corrosion of local cultural values. One recent guidebook even equates the dangers of Goa with those of Miami:

> The previously typical petty crimes consisting of theft and misdemeanours...have given way to robbery, murder and rape. Calangute now ranks with Miami beach (Hayit 1992:57).

Collectively this surely represents one of the strongest indictments of international tourism found in the literature on tourism development (for convenience, it is referred to herein simply as "the critique"). However, a number of reservations can be placed alongside these accusations. The intention here is not to deny the validity of the critique in its entirety (although some individual points are questioned); rather it is to provide additional observations and contextualisation.

There is no doubt that development along the coastal strip has been haphazard and uncontrolled. This has been partly due to the widespread flaunting of planning regulations by both large- and small-scale Goan and Indian developers. The state government has attempted to control building by the imposition of a complete ban on all structures within 200 m of the high-tide line (for a review of the complex history of this legislation see Ecoforum 1993:170-179). In addition, in December 1994, the central government placed a temporary injunction on all construction within 500 m of every beach in India, under pressure from the environmental lobby. During the 6-week injunction, each state had to make submissions to the Supreme Court concerning any ongoing construction as well as future development plans. However, one knowledgeable observer was pessimistic about the likelihood of any lasting change, suggesting that "for a couple of months all will be quiet, then slowly people will start to dig

foundations again, argue that they have planning permission, money will change hands, and it will be business as usual after six months".

Such opinions are reinforced by the English language newspapers in Goa which continually accuse the state government of inefficiency and corruption. So part of the problem lies in the rather chaotic and unplanned way in which tourism has been allowed to develop. However, there does appear to have been the occasional success, for example, in keeping the height of the hotels down to three stories, the approximate height of the palm trees, although this appears to have been due to pressure from the Goa Foundation and the Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz rather than the government itself, which appears strangely impotent in matters pertaining to control over development.

With regard to water supplies, there are a number of problems including the threat of salination in the coastal aquifers (either by locating wells too close to the sea or by ingress due to over-exploitation), the preferential access to scarce water supplies given to the larger hotels at the expense of the local population (some luxury hotels have water for 24 hours a day, whereas some local communities are supplied for less than 2 hours) and the transportation of water by tanker from inland village wells to the hotels (a trend which also threatens to exhaust local village supplies).

All these practices provoke legitimate concern, but once again the question of responsibility must be addressed. The government seems to be making little effort to control or alleviate these problems, although a report commissioned by them to investigate both the existing and planned water development schemes concluded that "an adequate water supply would be available in the state to serve both tourism and general community needs" (WTO 1994:96). This question of water supply is an impossible one for the layman to adjudicate but, despite the large amounts of water used by some hotels, it may well be that urbanisation poses a greater threat to water supplies in the long run.

Lest it be thought that tourism is the only or even the major environmental problem in Goa, it ought to be recorded that the environmental lobby campaigns vociferously against a number of other existing industries and current development projects. Their main targets include the contamination of agricultural land, drinking water, and river estuaries by pollution from two large chemical plants as well as from the mining industry, serious threats to the environment caused by the new Bombay-Goa railway, the danger of pollution from the massive nylon factory now under construction, and doubts over

the safety of the nuclear power station being built just over the border in Karnataka (Ecoforum 1993). Even inland areas away from the tourism zone would appear to fare no better:

> Extinction of species in the Western Ghats has been caused due to the destruction of habitat, disturbances, pollution due to industry or mining, single-crop cultivation, shifting cultivation, the use of fertilisers, accidental introductions of exotic species and forest fires...mining covers 14% of Goa's area. There are 581 mining concessions in force, with 350 square kilometers within forest areas (*The Herald* 1995a:7).

Mining is still Goa's largest industry, and brings in more foreign exchange than tourism. Urbanisation is another prominent feature of Goan life which is taking place independently of tourism development. The World Wildlife Fund has estimated that in 1961 only 14% of Goa's inhabitants had lived in an urban environment, whereas by 1991 this figure had risen to over 40 percent. It also claims that:

> Urbanisation has led to a loss of biodiversity in manifold ways—due to the loss of natural vegetation, water and air pollution, increased water run-off, changes in temperature (thermal pollution), and the over-exploitation of resources like nearby forests and fisheries (*The Herald* 1995a:6).

This discussion of the detrimental effects of industry and urbanisation is not an attempt to excuse the excesses of tourism development, only to place it in the context of a number of other environmental debates taking place across the state.

With the exception of Srisang, the critique also fails to mention the importance of domestic tourism. In 1980-81 there were estimated to be around 400,000 domestic and 40,000 foreign tourists in Goa (Angle 1983:60). The total number of tourists had risen to 1,765,000 in 1993 and reached 1,886,000 in 1991 (*The Herald* 1995b:5), although they are not divided into domestic and international. However, if the same ratio of 10 percent is assumed, this would give a figure of around 188,000 foreign tourists. This assumption is supported by one local newspaper which also contrasts the economic contributions of the two sectors:

> Charters account for 80 percent of the State's foreign tourist traffic. According to a Government of India survey, the domestic market accounts for 90 percent of the State's tourists, but 55 per cent of the earnings in this sector come from the meagre 8 per cent foreign segment. Con-

> sidering this and the fact that 85 per cent of revenue to five star hotels comes from the foreign tourist market, this year's cancellations (during the plague scare) have sent the industry into a tailspin...Presently, ten charter flights a week land in Goa, eight of them from the UK alone (*The Herald* 1994a:1).

In spite of its relatively small scale, international tourism thus makes a major economic contribution, although it has been estimated that in India generally over 75 per cent of the jobs generated by tourism are attributable to domestic tourism (Richter 1989:122). Not only this, India as a whole manages to retain a remarkable 94 per cent of its tourism income (due to its high level of industrialisation and large internal market), which also leads to an exceptionally high multiplier effect, estimated conservatively at between 3.2 and 3.6 (Richter 1989:122). So, even though international tourism continues to expand steadily, the vast majority of tourists are Indians themselves and much of the new construction work in Goa is aimed at the provision of holiday flats, apartments, and second homes for this domestic market, a market which has been stimulated by the construction of the new Bombay-Goa railway line due for completion in 1995. Foreign tourists may thus be taking the blame for problems caused in part by the growth of domestic tourism. At the very least, this is an important research question not addressed in the critique.

While condemning all forms of foreign tourism, the critique concentrates much of its attack on the five star hotels. There are relatively few such hotels in terms of the overall numbers. Hayit, presumably writing about the situation in 1991, comments:

> Goa's accommodation capacity has grown to over 270 tourist complexes with over 11,000 beds...However, only 14 of these complexes including family accommodation, meet the high standards set by Western sun worshipers. Only five of them can really be considered luxury holiday domiciles (1992:10).

In 1995 there were about 10 five star hotels, and the number could rise to around 19 by the end of the century. It must be acknowledged that at least one of these hotels does seem to have employed some rather unsavoury tactics to extend its property by intimidating the surrounding local inhabitants, that a number of others have perpetrated major violations of planning regulations within the 200 m zone, and that several proposed new luxury hotel developments appear to threaten nearby village communities. Villagers have certain hereditary rights as *mundkars* (tenants) to stay in their houses and

make use of coconut palms and cashew trees and the problem for any would-be developer:

> ...is that *mundkars* are difficult to get rid of. Some can be bought off, but most wish to stick to their traditional way of life. They realise that a sum of money is soon spent, whereas their rights to a house and trees can, in theory, last forever...The problem for the *mundkars* is that they lack the money to stand up for all their rights, and are powerless to prevent the character of their neighbourhood being destroyed all around them (Anderson 1995:52).

Hence the intimidation to induce them to leave "voluntarily". The Goa Foundation and Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz are important watchdogs in this respect and use a combination of adverse publicity and litigation as their main tactics to defend the rights of the villagers. However, this writer heard a different account of the well-publicised case of tourism buses being pelted with rotten fish and cow dung to the one given in the critique which tacitly implies that this was an attack on all forms of tourism. The buses in question were organised by a large hotel to transport its customers direct from the airport to the resort, thus eliminate the need for middlemen in the form of local taxis and minibuses. These small-scale local entrepreneurs (most taxi drivers own their vehicles), along with some owners of more modest hotels and guest-houses, participated in the demonstration not because they objected to tourism as such, but because the growth of the charter-package business was putting their own livelihoods in jeopardy by threatening the broad-based distribution of benefits that the traditional pattern of tourism allows. In other words, the attack on the buses can be seen as part of a conflict over who was going to get access to the tourism dollar, rather than a rebellion against the industry itself.

Regarding the sexual behaviour of young Westerns, Lea quotes Mehta's description of how Goan girls crossing the beach on their way to a convent school at Calangute had to pass "hundreds of naked bodies of every hue and national origin, coupling in the sand" (1993:709). However, the behaviour of young foreigners in the 90s bears no resemblance to this earlier nudity and "free love" image. With regard to nakedness, there was plenty of topless sunbathing but no outright nudity although a smattering of *tongas* (G-strings) were to be seen. In 1993-94 the tourism police who patrolled the beaches had asked topless women to cover themselves but in 1994-95, they were being left alone, perhaps indicating a shift in government policy or changing perceptions as to the seriousness of such offenses. Concerning promiscuous behaviour among foreign tourists on the beaches, there

was none whatsoever to be observed. This also applies to the moonlight parties, one of the most striking features of which was the lack of public expressions of intimacy between the sexes. The reported sexual excesses of the 60s seemed to have been replaced by a much more modest code of conduct among the young tourists now visiting Goa.

While nudity and promiscuity have been understandably decried by many as an offense against traditional cultural values, the Indian response to the presence of semi-naked bodies on the beach has also been an ambivalent one. For some, the foreign tourists have become objects of curiosity and voyeuristic interest, and there is a well-established tradition of Indian tourists visiting the beaches to observe the activities of the hippies and photograph the Western women. However, several regular visitors to Goa felt that this practice was beginning to decline, although Vagator and Anjuna beaches were still receiving regular coach loads of domestic tourists, presumably because of their local reputation as hippie venues, as were some of the moonlight parties. One restaurateur commented that, whereas 10 years ago local people had been shocked by semi-naked bodies, they were now used to it and it no longer offended them so much, although some local women said that the behaviour of Western women still set a bad example to young Indian men.

Concerning drugs, these were readily available largely because there was no serious attempt by the local police authorities to prohibit them, apart from the occasional token arrest and prosecution, usually for small-scale dealing. There were, however, many stories of police searching tourists for drugs in order that *baksheesh* could be extracted from them to avoid prosecution (US$200 was said to be the going rate). Control of the drug business is now apparently in Indian hands rather than a strictly foreign activity as previously, a view supported by Albuquerque who details some of the colourful history of relations between the drug barons and the police in the Anjuna area (1988:84-87). Nor was any attempt made by the police to interfere at "licensed" moonlight parties at which marijuana, ecstasy, and other drugs were taken quite openly. Locally-produced tourism maps even had the main party spots clearly marked on them, one of which was actually located behind a police station. The exploitative behaviour of the police has also been noted by Turner:

> If tourists in Goa are caught with any drugs, including marijuana, the authorities show no mercy. Quite a sizeable amount of *baksheesh* is required to avoid prosecution and an almost certain jail sentence...The future of Goa's famous beach parties is at present open to conjecture, as

> the sums demanded from their organisers by the police have become too high for most to afford. Apparently, if money is not forthcoming, large parties are raided and broken up (1994:39-41).

Again, the critique fails to mention this complicity on the part of the local police. Nor, for that matter, does it acknowledge the active involvement of local people in the organisation of moonlight parties. When allowed to proceed, the entrepreneurial activity surrounding these raves clearly provides many local Goans with a welcome source of additional income; see Wilson (1994) for a descriptive account of one such party.

As to prostitution, there seemed little evidence of this with either foreign men or women, in spite of the allegations to the contrary in the critique. The author was not approached personally, nor were others observed being solicited (either tourists or locals), nor was any evidence forthcoming from conversations with many other tourists (of both sexes) about sexual contact with the local population and, further, on similar grounds, there was no evidence for the existence of any pedophile activity. From this it is possible to suggest that either it does not exist, or that if it does it is very discrete and small scale, or that perhaps it does exist but largely between the local population and the domestic tourists. In fact, the only complaints heard were of young Western women being "touched up" by drunken Indian men at raves, which occasionally led to fights as male tourists stepped in to protect them. Anderson also makes a passing reference to domestic male tourists who are attracted to Goa because of its liberal attitude towards the consumption of alcohol and who misinterpret the behaviour of the more emancipated Goan Catholic women:

In sum, the frequent comparison made between Goa and Thailand or other well-known sex-tourism destinations seems to be a serious misrepresentation of the facts, although the critique could be in danger of turning it into a self-fulfilling prophecy by attracting a more undesirable type of foreign tourist to Goa, lured by false expectations of what might be found there.

The reality of the situation thus seems more complex than the critique suggests, and although there are a number of problems inherent in Goan tourism, it is premature to dismiss the entire industry in a series of dogmatic assertions as to its destructive nature. The traditional blend of domestic and low-budget tourism has a relatively low impact on the local environment, whereas the present trend towards up-market hotels would appear to be more ecologically damaging and socially disruptive. It can be argued that there are other positive aspects to the tourism industry as it has been traditionally

structured. These advantages largely concern the wide local ownership of resources and the broad distribution of benefits throughout the local community, a view which would appear to be endorsed by the general welcome extended to tourists in Goa.

*North Goa*

The 14 km stretch of palm-fringed beaches and bays lying between Aguada Fort and Chapora Fort to the north of the capital Panjim has witnessed the most intensive tourism development in Goa and provides an illuminating example of its diversity. The old coastal fishing villages of Aguada, Candolim, Calangute, Baga, Anjuna, Vagator and Chapora which lies between the two forts are fast becoming merged into one long continuous strip of resorts. This part of North Goa attracts the whole gamut of tourists including long-stay travellers and young backpackers often passing through India on their way further East (the hippies, usually found in rented rooms at Chapora, Vagator, and Anjuna); flight-only, low-budget, shorter-stay visitors staying in a diversity of rented rooms, guest houses and cheap hotels (mainly around Anjuna, Baga and Calangute); regular winter visitors including expatriates from places as far apart as Europe, Nepal, and the Far East (staying in cheap hotels around Baga and Calangute); charter-package tourists (in hotels at Baga, Calangute, and Candolim); and up-market tourists (in a small number of international-standard hotels between Candolim and Aguada).

There were also a large number of domestic tourists, especially around Calangute. Until recently, these came mainly from the adjacent provinces of Maharashtra and Karnataka. But they are now being replaced by growing numbers of nouveau-riche Indians from Bombay and elsewhere who come down to enjoy the beach for its own sake and also avail themselves of the liberal laws pertaining to alcohol consumption found in Goa. Further, large numbers of pilgrims were visiting Goa during the winter of 1994-95, as this was the time of the exposition of the remains of St Francis Xavier (held once every 10 years) whose incorrupt body lies in the Basilica at Old Goa. An estimated 1.2 million visitors filed past the relics during the 18-day exposition (The Herald 1995c:1), many of whom visited the beaches of North Goa during their stay. Other religious festivals such as the annual Carnival preceding Lent also draw large numbers of domestic tourists in the state.

The most visible feature of the tourism industry in North Goa is the small scale of most of the accommodation, restaurants, and beach shacks, virtually all of which are owned by Goans themselves, although the two large 5-star hotels are owned by Indian consor-

tiums. None were under expatriate control or management. There is an extensive range of ancillary services such as taxis (motorbikes and auto-rickshaws as well as cabs and minivans), motorbike and scooter hire, tourism shops, roadside stalls and markets, and numerous varieties of beach vending, which again are all in either Goan or Indian hands. The extent of this local involvement in tourism enterprises can be estimated as follows:

The approximate number of hotels can be calculated from a comprehensive set of three local tourism maps published in 1994 (Lobo nd). These maps probably reflect the situation in 1993 and hotel numbers are Vagator-Anjuna 11, Baga-Calangute 46, and Candolim-Vagator-Anjuna 5, Baga-Calangute 40, and Candolim-Aguada 11 (a total of 56). The vast majority of charter-package tourists are British. A survey of brochures issued by five of the main British tour operators reveals that they use the following types of accommodation in North Goa: Kuoni, none in North Goa; Bales, 1x5-star hotel; British Airways Worldwide, 1x5-star hotel; Hayes and Jarvis, 2x5-star and 7x2/3-star hotels; Inspirations, 1x5-star, 2x3-star, and 11x2-star hotels, 12 guest-houses, and 1 "dorm-house". All use the same 5-star hotels, and all but one of Hayes and Jarvis's are the same as Inspirations. This gives a total of 31 hotels and guest-houses (excluding the dormhouse) used by these British charter-package tourists out of a combined total of 149 hotels and guest-houses in the area, which again gives some indication of the size of the domestic market. The accommodation offered by Inspirations caters to all the various types of Western tourist to be found in North Goa in a single brochure.

Rooms for rent are not recorded on the maps, but the vast majority of these are to be found at the northern end of the coastal strip, the main destination for the long-stay travellers and backpackers (most of whom enter Goa overland from elsewhere in India). The large size of this sector is indicated by the presence of no less than 86 cafes in the Vagator-Anjuna area, which cater mainly to this market, alongside a mere 16 hotels and guest-houses. Albuquerque also comments on the impact of this business on the local economy:

> There are many in Anjuna to whom the tourist boom has indeed been a great boon. Even just the rent earned for a single room in a house has quite often enabled the owner to maintain the building and keep it from crumbling down (1988:87).

Between Baga and Aguada Fort there were no less than 12 medium to large complexes of studios, apartments, and holiday-homes under construction, several with accompanying shops, swim-

ming pools, and sports facilities, most of which appeared to be aimed at the domestic rather than the overseas market (and which will clearly increase pressure on existing water supplies). It may well be that foreign tourists will be displaced from increasing sections of beach by the growing numbers of domestic tourists, although it is not being suggested here that this constitutes a problem. This was already happening around Calangute where a number of female tourists reported that they had felt uncomfortable sunbathing or even just strolling along the beach in the presence of such large numbers of Indian tourists. Domestic tourism seems qualitatively different to foreign tourism in several respects, including numbers (large, often noisy groups vs. smaller, quieter groups of Westerners), dress (Indian dress codes emphasising female modesty vs. liberal Western attitudes towards exposed flesh), and behaviour (Indian promenading vs. visitor sunbathing), although increasing numbers of young Indian couples were to be seen who both dressed and behaved in the Western fashion. Unfortunately, one of the major weaknesses of the present research was the lack of significant contact with these domestic tourists.

As to cafes and restaurants, the numbers recorded on the maps are Vagator-Anjuna 86, Baga-Calangute 93, and Candolim-Aguada 29 (a total of 208). These were mainly located along the roads behind the beaches. Many of these seemed to have relatively few customers at the time of the study, which was curious given that December/January is the high season. Some suggested that this was due to the plague scare and there were two versions of this argument: one, that tourist numbers were much lower than in previous years because of the scare and, second, that numbers were not in fact down but in order to fill cancelled seats many tickets had been sold at rock bottom prices to people with little spare cash or interest in dining out and who preferred to spend their money on alcohol or drugs. In fact, although tourist numbers did decline during September, October, and November, the December figure of 220,000 was the highest ever recorded for a single month in Goa (*The Herald* 1995b:5). A more likely explanation for the empty cafes and restaurants is perhaps to be found in the increasing competition from the beach shacks, as many tourists chose to eat on the beach rather than alongside the often noisy and busy roads. Much of the tourism accommodation is at present provided on a bed and breakfast basis which generates considerable business for these large numbers of cafes and shacks. It can thus be seen why there is growing resentment towards the development of package tourism in which half-board (dinner, bed and breakfast) is provided by the hotel itself.

Beach shacks are constructed out of matted palm fronds attached to a framework of poles. From the maps, numbers for 1993 are Vagator-Anjuna 5, Baga-Calangute 26, and Candolim-Aguada 15 (a total of 41 along the 8 km of beach stretching from Baga to Aguada Fort). Locals said that by the end of the previous season (May 1994) there had been some 70 shacks along the same strip. A count of the shacks during the present study revealed Vagator-Anjuna 29, Baga-Calangute 71, and Candolim-Aguada 48, so by New Year 1994-95 there was a total of 199, clearly a massive increase. A new development in 1994, perhaps reflecting this increasing competition for business, was the first appearance of beach chairs and sun shelters. There had only been a handful of chairs and no shelters the previous year, but by New Year 1994-95 there were chairs and shelters outside every shack for tourists to use free of charge, the only obligation being to buy food and drink from that shack. These sun shelters, flimsy awnings made of palm leaves or cotton cloth, were all illegal because they infringed the planning regulations governing structures within 200 m of the high-tide mark. Warnings were issued that they had to be dismantled, but nothing happened until the police appeared on the beach one day. There was pandemonium as some of the shacks tore down their sun shelters from around the startled tourists, although the police did not remove any themselves. However, the following day they started to go up again and before long they had all been rebuilt. It must be said that most tourists welcomed the awnings which were temporary structures made out of local materials. However, the fact that the police appeared unwilling (again there were rumours of *baksheesh*) to enforce such a simple and obvious breach of government regulations points to the difficulties Goa faces in dealing with more complex planning irregularities.

Only locals can put up shacks and they can choose any place not already occupied. The shacks are dismantled each May before the arrival of the monsoon. Once established the site "belongs" to the occupier. If the family owns land adjacent to the beach at this point it further strengthens their claim on that location, but this is not an essential requirement. Licences must be obtained from the State Tourism Department to make the shack official, otherwise it can be dismantled by the police. At the time of the study, the department had been withholding the renewal of licenses, and one local newspaper suggested that they were being held back "at the behest of some disgruntled hoteliers" (*The Goa Post* 1994:5). This supports the suggestion made above that the beach shacks were a major cause of the dearth of business in the roadside cafes and restaurants (it was said that the takings of one hotel restaurant were only a third of those of the previous season). The official reason, according to the newspa-

per report, was that "the shacks are erected within the stipulated 200 metres of high tide water line" and also "on account of the alleged pollution of the beaches". Yet many of these same shacks had been issued with licenses the previous year. One shack owner said that it was because the government was getting worried about the rapid proliferation of shacks. Whatever the reason, the article concluded that this "dilly-dallying of the Government of Goa tantamounts to sabotaging low-budget tourism and depriving unemployed youth of their livelihood". If the average shack employs 5-10 people, then the government's action was jeopardizing between 740 and 1,480 jobs.

In addition to the shacks a variety of vendors are to be found working on the beaches. A count taken during an average weekday revealed Vagator-Anjuna 68 (37 selling lunghis, 24 ethnic bags, hats, etc., 2 beads, 2 ice pops and soft drinks, 1 drums, and 2 fresh fruit) and Baga-Aguada Fort 117 (69 selling lunghis, 35 ethnic bags, hats, etc., 44 fresh fruit, 11 masseurs who were all male except for two middle-aged women, 5 drums, 4 stone carvings, 2 hand-painted pictures, 4 ice pops and soft drinks, 1 beads, 1 ice-cream, and 1 cigarettes). There was no indication that any of the masseurs were using this as a cover for prostitution, as the critique suggests. The beach vendors have also been accused of harassment:

> Even while the victim is dozing or reading, the salesmen show no mercy, "Hallo. You wanna buy..." The seriousness of the problem is recognized by the authorities, and beach police patrols are supposed to protect the tourists. Only very rarely, however, do they intervene, the vendors apparently having discovered ways of persuading the police to ignore their presence (Turner 1994:33).

However, the vast majority of tourists encountered during the present study were unperturbed by such activities and it was said that the vendors were far easier to deal with than those found in other long haul destinations such as the Far East or the Caribbean. Most of the beach trading was in the hands of local Goan women, although in the previous years the tourism police had apparently become involved in territorial disputes between the local women and others from outside the state. A division of labour now seems to have been established with the latter restricted to selling their colourful ethnic items of clothing and costume jewelry.

A count was also taken of tourism shops and stalls along the main road running parallel to the coastal strip from Baga to Aguada Fort. Altogether there were 269 (Baga-Calangute 103, in and around Calangute 126, and Calangute-Aguada 49). There were probably a similar number along the side roads between the main road and the

shore, although no count was made of these. Many of these shops and roadside stalls are run by seasonal Indian migrants such as Kashmiris, Rajasthanis, and "gypsies" said to be Lambani and Banjara from the Deccan plateau in Karnataka. To some extent these migrants fill occupational niches (Rajasthanis and Kashmiris sell carpets, wood carvings, brass sculptures, paper maché boxes, jewelry, etc., while the Lambani and Banjara sell brightly coloured ethnic costumes, bags, waistcoats and jewelry). Their presence caused resentment in some quarters for taking jobs away from Goans, although others said they were welcome because they did jobs that no Goans wished to undertake. There also seemed little hostility towards the young foreign tourists participating at the Anjuna market. Every Wednesday a flea market is held at Anjuna where traders from throughout the area flock to sell their wares, mainly colourful Indian clothes and a wide range of jewelry and souvenirs. A corner of the market is occupied by hippies selling a fascinating variety of goods and services including Himalayan rock crystals, hand-painted shoes, hair wraps and braiding, rave music cassettes, ear and nose piercing, health foods supplements, reflexology, tarot readings, cosmic creations, hammocks, and even teepees.

Most of the various facilities and services enumerated at some length above are provided by small, independent, indigenously-owned businesses. It is clear from the small scale and diversity of these activities that there is an extensive spread of economic benefits throughout the local community, although there was evidence to suggest that supply was beginning to outstrip demand in some areas (such as the uncontrolled proliferation of beach shacks). It must also be noted that tourism in Goa is a seasonal activity, with little activity during the monsoon months, and so opportunities to profit from it are circumscribed. Still, tourism along the Chapora-Aguada strip continues to expand steadily, as is the case throughout the state, and the final section considers the future of tourism in Goa.

## The Future

Goa is one of the cheapest long-haul destinations, a mere 10 hours flying time from London, and has undergone a transformation over the last decade. But what are the limits to growth of tourism in Goa? The official line seems to be that tourism can continue to expand for some time yet which was also the conclusion reached by a World Tourism Organization (WTO) study commissioned by the state government. It applies the formula of 1 m of beach frontage per tourist to the 46 km of available beach and recommends that development can be expanded to 46,000 tourism beds and projects that

"some 4.1 million tourist arrivals could be received at the optimum development" (WTO 1994:95). The study also concludes that "there are not expected to be any serious adverse environmental and socio-cultural impacts from the expansion of tourism" (WTO 1994:97), an assessment that one reviewer describes as "loopy" and indicative of a serious failure on the part of the WTO to address the whole question of sustainability (Burns 1994).

The authorities seem keen to promote up-market tourism. Chief Minister de Souza has "emphasized that more attention needs to be paid to the up-market tourists who spend more so as to enhance the earnings through tourism" (*The Herald* 1994b:1), and Anderson interviewed the Director of Tourism who told him that:

> Luxury tourism was the way forward. Hippies and backpackers do not bring in enough money. Package tourists might, but only if you allow in millions of them. International high-rollers bring in the money in low numbers. (The Director) was not worried that hotels would destroy Goa's coastline, forcing the international traveller to move on to some other Eden...Strict controls were being enforced to stop buildings being too close to the beach and tourism was going to be the backbone of the Goan economy (1995:40).

The local press at times also advocates up-market tourism, although for social and environmental reasons rather than for financial ones:

> ...the tourist industry should have concentrated on quality rather than quantity...which would have been achieved by targeting the upper middle class tourists rather than the plumbers and the masons and the bar tenders who form the majority of the present charter traffic...If the tourist traffic is permitted to expand infinitely, particularly in an unplanned manner, the fragile infrastructure which is under tremendous pressure, will collapse (*The Herald* 1995c).

While superficially attractive, it is the opinion of this observer that this focus on up-market tourism is out of keeping with the present structure of the tourism industry in Goa, which is mainly low-budget and served by a multitude of small hotels, guest-houses, rented rooms, and a host of ancillary services as has been shown in the survey of North Goa. Even though it restricts numbers, up-market tourism puts pressure, disproportionate to the numbers involved, on the socioeconomic as well as environmental fabric of the local com-

munity, and this applies regardless of whether or not the luxury hotels are in breach of the law. Richards warns that the whole character of Goa could be destroyed "if they were to build it up in standard international style, alien to the spirit of the place" (1993:7). The needs of overseas tourists must also be balanced against the needs of the local tourists, and he supports the provision of a diversity of types of accommodation in order that the foreign visitors "do not become isolated in their own enclaves" (1993:130). He continues:

> Alternative, and perhaps less expensive, types of accommodation than those usually offered to foreign tourists could help them get closer to the life of the country, especially its rural and village life, and give them more chances to enjoy that co-existence of two cultures, the Oriental and the Iberian (1993:130).

Another disadvantage of up-market tourism is that it is out of keeping with the way of life of the majority of local people and its successful implementation would necessitate far-reaching changes in attitudes towards service, timekeeping, hygiene, garbage, sanitation, etc. However, the Indian government's recent policy of economic liberalisation seems likely to attract increasing overseas investment in tourism and "some big names being mentioned in industrial circles are Southern Pacific Hotel Corp., Hyatt, Four Seasons, Days Inn of USA, Holiday Inn and the Hilton" (*The Mirror* 1995:1). The danger here is that control over up-market tourism could pass out of indigenous hands into foreign ownership and that these multinationals might be even less sensitive to the social, cultural, and environmental issues addressed above.

Again, there could also be difficulties ahead with the continuing growth of cheap charter-package tourism. One newspaper editorial warns that it is vulnerable to mass cancellations following any bad publicity (such as the plague scare) and that its very success might contain the seeds of its own destruction, as prices go up due to the rising demand until it reaches "a point when the destination ceases to be attractive and the extremely cost conscious charter tourists switch to a newer, less expensive destination" (*The Herald* 1995c:4). This process may be underway already. It was earlier suggested that low prices are one reason why tourists enthuse about their holidays, although the frequent complaints made by regular visitors concerning escalating costs were also noted. While still cheap by European standards, if the present rate of increase persists it will not be long before Goa loses one of its major attractions for foreign visitors. Goa is also at present free from large groups of young charter tourists of the sort who go to the beach resorts of the Mediterra-

nean looking for cheap lager, all-night discos, and sexual encounters. But for how much longer can they be kept out of Goa if cheap charter-package tourism is allowed to expand is uncertain. Such tourism would be far less sensitive to local people and culture than the travellers and backpackers who accept without complaint the pig toilets in the villages of North Goa. In any case, the small size and poor standard of many of the existing hotels is not really conducive to the requirements of charter-package tourism. On the other hand, there has been a form of low-budget, low-impact tourism for 30 years in Goa. Nowadays there is little evidence of hostility and resentment among local people against the majority of such tourists. It has been argued that this is, in part, because the economic benefits they bring have been spread widely throughout the local community. Anderson conversed with one villager in North Goa who told him that:

> The villagers...were devout Catholics and they had been offended by hippies bathing naked in front of their homes. But that had now stopped. [They were] not bothered by the hippies' lifestyle. The village as a whole were happy to augment their incomes by renting out rooms in their houses to budget travellers and running little cafes and bars which fell well short of overwhelming village life (1995:28).

Even the Goa Foundation, which condemns "hippie tourism", concedes in the final paragraph of its chapter on tourism that:

> With all its drawbacks, this kind of tourism still presents a healthy alternative to the five-star tourist culture. It is kinder to the environment and the local people involved. There is a genuine attempt to respect the cultural sentiments of the people...If only some of the more undesirable aspects could be weeded out, we might have the seeds of an alternative tourism right here (Ecoforum 1993:195).

Not only do these low-budget tourists require relatively little additional infrastructure to accommodate them and put the least pressure on existing water resources, they bring other less easily quantified benefits. Richter's comments are as applicable to Goa as to Bangladesh about which she wrote:

> Net economic gains are often higher from tourism pegged at these groups with their long stays and their simple lifestyles than those requiring capital intensive facilities... the social and political costs, although harder to measure, are likely to be less in terms of relative deprivation, conspicuous consumption, political payoffs, kickbacks, and political grandstanding (1989:153).

However, low-budget tourism is not without its own problems. There were many stories of theft recounted, usually thought to be carried out by hard-up fellow travellers rather than by members of the local community. Theft was particularly common during the nights when moonlight parties were being held and all would leave their rented rooms and houses to attend the raves. It was said that locals in some North Goan villages would occasionally administer a beating to any tourist who stepped too far out of line. On the other hand, some of the long-stay visitors have become involved in local environmental issues and assist in finding solutions to some of the problems created by tourism. One very small example of this concerns empty plastic mineral water bottles, first introduced about 5 years ago, and which rapidly became a major source of beach pollution. In 1993 a group of some 10 long-stay semi-resident Westerners got together and donated 100 rupees a week (approximately US$4) each to a fund which paid several local women to collect the empty bottles off the beaches in and out of the bushes behind the beach shacks between Baga and Calangute. The women could then supplement their income by selling the plastic bottles as scrap for recycling. The beach is said to be noticeably cleaner now than it was previously.

As previously noted, there is virtually no mention of domestic tourism in the critique and it also seems to be ignored by the state government, even though there could be as many as 10 Indian tourists to each foreigner. Richter suggests that domestic tourism "tends to be neglected by policy makers because it does not generate foreign exchange and is not perceived to be as glamorous as international tourism" (1989:104), and she goes on to discuss some of the advantages of domestic tourism. When domestic tourism is at the budget rather than the up-market end of the spectrum, according to Richter, it can facilitate the integration of domestic and international tourism:

> More modest accommodations attract a mix of domestic population and a potpourri of other nationalities. This in turn reduces the potential for backlash or outright sabotage that has accompanied luxury tourism in such varied societies as Jamaica and the Philippines (1989:106).

Nor is it as fickle and as vulnerable as international tourism, it does not require so much foreign exchange to develop, it is less dependent on foreign airlines and tour operators, it is less subject to seasonality, it has less of a colonial character, and it can help foster national integration (Richter 1989:105-106). However, domestic tourism has also caused problems in Goa. One critic has urged the Tourism Department to draw up a stringent code for visitor conduct dur-

ing the annual Carnival which precedes Lent "to ensure that morality was not corrupted and the cultural image of Goa not tarnished" (*The Herald* 1995d:4). The same newspaper suggests elsewhere that "without the lure of cheap liquor, domestic tourists might lose their enthusiasm for sustaining the Goan economy" (*The Herald* 1995e:2). *The Herald* also laments that the pace of change has been further boosted with the influx of a large number of non-Goans who have purchased a considerable amount of land and houses from the locals (*The Herald* 1994e:7). The potential for clashes between the domestic and foreign tourist lifestyles has been noted earlier along with hints that some domestic tourists may be responsible for pestering both local and western women.

Finally, instead of concentrating on leisure tourism of the sea, sun and sand variety, it has been suggested that there should be more encouragement of alternative forms of tourism:

> The tourism industry in the state should diversify the market if it is not to be at the mercy of the strictly fair weather variety of charter tourists. Pilgrims and heritage tourism must replace beach resort tourism as the bed rock of the tourism industry in Goa. (*The Herald* 1995c).

This Herald article also suggest that the large and affluent expatriate Goan population overseas (both Christian and Hindu) should be encouraged to return as tourists. Goa has much to offer in terms of its cultural and religious heritage, with its festivals, Hindu temples, and Catholic churches, including the tomb of St. Francis Xavier in the Basilica of Bom Jesus. There are also the weekly markets at Mapusa and Anjuna to visit as well as the capital Panaji (formally Panjim), a small city which still retains some of its Portuguese character and where "all points of interest can be visited on foot in one day" (Turner 1994:49). Inland, there are several wildlife sanctuaries and the waterfalls at Dudhsagar to be seen. For international tourists, Goa offers a relatively hassle-free introduction to the Indian way of life and, even though the majority of them are drawn there initially by the beaches, most do seem to make at least one or two trips away from the coast.

## Conclusion

Exploring the two paradoxes with which this paper began has led in a number of directions. The recent construction boom has not led to a rash of high-rise beach front developments such as are found in Spain and many other European resorts. Goa is no concrete jungle yet. Comparisons with Benidorm and Miami Beach are grossly inac-

curate and misleading. The beaches are not overcrowded by European standards, few hotels or guest-houses can actually be seen from the beaches, and they are generally small in size and modest in height. Nor is violence or prostitution rampant, the beaches are reasonably safe to walk at night, women do not feel particularly threatened or harassed, and tourists enthused about the welcome they received in Goa. It would appear that the critique has exaggerated some of these problems while ignoring other issues, such as police corruption or the role of domestic tourism.

The real battle is over what sort of tourism will dominate the future and what its consequences will be. Sadly, the critique is extremely negative towards tourism in any shape or form and has no positive recommendations to offer. With regard to international tourism, it appears to this writer that the low-budget, relatively low-impact variety of tourism has been beneficial to a great number of Goans over the years and that the current emphasis on charter-package and up market tourism both involve dangers which are potentially detrimental to the future of tourism in Goa. It would thus seem sensible to maintain the current broad market base of the industry. Perhaps it would also be advantageous to encourage greater diversification in the type of tourists who visit Goa with more emphasis being placed on cultural and heritage tourism. However, the government's present policy of advocating a massive expansion of tourism appears shortsighted and more likely to exacerbate rather than solve the existing problems.

While remaining alert to the costs of various types of tourism development, this paper has sought to assess some of its benefits to the local community as well as speculating on options for the future. If the rate of growth could be slowed down, if planning regulations could be strictly enforced, and if suitable measures could be introduced to alleviate some of the other problems such as differential access to water supplies and protecting the rights of the *mundkars*, there seems no reason why an acceptable balance between the cost and benefits of tourism could not be achieved.

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*Note*—Since this paper was written, the author returned to Goa for a second period of fieldwork during December 1995. The most noticeable feature was the accelerating pace of development and proliferation of new buildings, especially along the Aguada-Chapora strip analysed above. For example, the number of medium- to large-scale developments under construction between Aguada Fort and Baga had increased from 12 to 45. There was also evidence of growing conflict between the different types of tourism in Goa and the vested inter-

ests that support them (Wilson 1996b). If anything, the local authorities appeared even more powerless to implement and enforce appropriate development plans and policies, and the outlook for the future thus seemed bleaker than during the 1994-95 season discussed in this article.

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# The Transforming of Goa

"The purpose of this book", wrote Norman Dantas, "is to help Goans break out of the fossilized *amchem bhangarachem Goem* ('our golden Goa') mindset and to promote a better understanding of where we really are at."

Thus *The Transforming of Goa* attempts to focus on Goa and the Goan identity as it has been—in flux and transformation—between the tradition-bound Portuguese period and the present India-oriented, development-driven democratic times. The book takes a close critical look at Goa's changing face and thus provides a much needed counterpoint to the considerable mythification that Goans are subjected to.

The essays selected for inclusion here are not esoteric articles, but deal with the matters and concerns of everyday life in Goa including the *tiatr*, the destruction of the Goan environment, the distortion of Goan culture abroad, the celebration of Konkani *mai*, nationalism, local culture, the life of the Gawda-Kunbis, tourism and its impact on society and environment, the role of the church, the media and many other similar issues. It is for the first time that all these essays written by first rate scholars, academics and journalists—and which have hitherto remained scattered in different journals—have been brought together in a single volume which all Goans—and all those also keenly interested in Goa—are bound to relish and enjoy.

Contributors include Prabhakar Angley, B V Apte, Robert S Newman, Frederick Noronha, Nishtha Tombat, Teotonio R de Souza, Claude Alvares, Pramod Kale, Devendra Karapurkar, Anita Haladi and David Wilson.

## About the Editor

*Norman Dantas, born in 1953, graduated from St. Xavier's College, Bombay University. He joined* Goa Today *first as Associate Editor and then Executive Editor. Thereafter he worked as Assistant Editor,* O Heraldo, *Executive Editor,* Goa Post, *and again Deputy Editor,* O Heraldo. *In 1986, he helped found the Goa Foundation. He died on March 21, 1998, shortly after he had completed this book.*

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